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The Week

AS THE storm clouds lighten somewhat in the Far East, they are gathering in Europe. The most important and ominous news in many months is that Germany has defied the Treaty of Versailles and announces that she is about to re-introduce conscription, with an army of 600,000 men or more. Her public statement came on the heels of the news that France intends to double the period of service for her conscripts, making them serve two years instead of one. It was also preceded by Russia's announcement that if Germany were permitted to carry out her plans, the U.S.S.R. would find it necessary to increase her forces. Only a short time earlier had come the news that Great Britain is making tentative plans for a large increase in her military force. The dogs of war that have been baying faintly in the distance for so long are coming nearer with terrifying rapidity.

MEANWHILE, from the Orient we learn of an improvement in relations between Soviet Russia and Japan. After years of negotiation, the Russians have at last sold the Chinese Eastern Railway to the Japanese, though the nominal purchaser is the dummy kingdom of Manchukuo. By all the logic of geography, the railroad ought to be a part of the Trans-Siberian, and the fact that the Russians have given it up is excellent evidence that they want peace. Further proof is found in their proposal for a demilitarized zone between Siberia and Manchukuo. In a military sense, Japan probably has more to gain from such a plan than has the U.S.S.R.; for presumably, the Soviet airplanes would be withdrawn from Vladivostok, and would then be out of striking distance of the all-important Japanese industrial cities. Siberia, on the other hand, is largely wild, unsettled country where Japanese invaders could not do much damage in any case. That the Japanese are now willing to consider such a plan as this does not mean that they have had any sudden change of heart. On the contrary, it is presumptive evidence of their realization that Russian strength in the Far East has grown faster than they had supposed it could possibly do.

IT ALSO means, perhaps, that the Japanese now see the dangers of the alignment of the European nations into which they have drifted. In a war between Japan, Poland and Germany on one side and France and Russia on the other, it now looks as though England and Italy would both be found fighting in the second group. From the probable result of such a war, Japan would have much to lose and little to gain. That Italy and France now understand each other is further shown by a development of the past week, the Italian gesture of conciliation toward Jugoslavia. Who can suppose that Mussolini would have taken an initiative of this sort, except at the prompting of the French? Meanwhile, we record with regret that while the relations between Japan and Soviet Russia seem to be notably improving, that is not the case as between the Japanese and ourselves. The American government is aiding Pan-American Airways in establishing a series of commercial aviation fields in our territories scattered through the Pacific—on Guam, Midway and Wake Islands. These bases are being set up as a preliminary to regular trans-Pacific aviation service for passengers and freight. The Japanese, however, point out quite correctly that there is hardly any difference between the construction of a commercial and a military air field;

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and they profess to view the development with the liveliest apprehension.

IN THE field of domestic affairs, the most important event of the week was the President's victory on the matter of the wages to be paid persons on work relief under the pending bill appropriating $4,880,000,000. The President will have discretionary power over wages on all projects except a comparatively insignificant group of federal buildings. This means, of course, that he proposes to pay only $50 a month, which means in turn that a large part of our population will be kept at a near-starvation level, and recovery from the depression will be postponed that much longer. Reports from Washington say that the President's victory was achieved partly by threatening to cut off public-works funds from the states whose Senators were opposing him. Other outstanding events of the week include the scandal over relief in Ohio, and the attempt to deport John Strachey, young English Communist writer and speaker, on the ground of entering the country under false pretenses. The situation in Ohio does indeed, on the basis of the evidence presented, look ugly; though there is something a little strange about the display of virtuous indignation made by an administration that contains Jim Farley and approves of what he does. On the arrest of John Strachey, we are commenting elsewhere in this issue.

THE revolt in Cuba has failed, and the island is now in the grip of an iron-clad military dictatorship. President Mendieta is only nominally in control; the real ruler is Colonel Batista, with his well disciplined, well equipped army. The first act of the government has been to seize all the funds and other physical property of the trade unions, which are now outlawed and for the present, at least, completely helpless. It is worth while to stick a pin through the fact that the United States must bear a large part of the blame for the fascist regime that now has Cuba in its grip. The one government acceptable to her population that Cuba has had since the overthrow of Machado, that of Grau, we refused to approve, and our policy of non-recognition was an important factor in causing its downfall. Now we shall see a government probably quite as repressive as that of Machado, whose rule will be marked by continual turmoil, a government that is likely to be followed by a radical regime or a period of chaos. The longer one considers our Cuban policy, the less sense it seems to possess.

THE report that the Italian consuls in East Africa have informed Rome that war drums are sounding throughout northern Ethiopia as a signal for general mobilization fits perfectly into the usual imperialistic pattern. Until it was reported that the native tribes were gathering in force it was impossible for Mussolini to declare that Italy's dispatch of troops and airplanes to Somaliland was a purely precautionary measure. The present Italian tactics in Ethiopia are so identical with those adopted by Japan whenever she is ready to carve out another province in China that it is only logical to believe an Italian invasion is imminent. The Ethiopian government has appealed to the League of Nations for intervention, necessitating an extraordinary meeting of the League Council, but the appeal is foredoomed to failure. Italy has reiterated her suggestion that she be permitted to deal with the situation by direct negotiations. These negotiations, which simply mean force, will be carried out regardless of any decisions of the League.

THE anti-Red hysteria is now in full swing in this country. In state after state, laws are being passed, or old ones are being revived, making it a penitentiary offense to belong to any political organization that advocates violent revolution; some of these laws are so loosely framed that they could be used against almost any party. In state after state, bills are being introduced that, in effect, would make all political parties illegal except the Republicans and the Democrats. Children in the public schools are being obliged to take an oath of allegiance to the American form of government (which means in practice, the system of private capitalism) and teachers in the same schools are being put under similar restrictions. We have recently described in our pages the pending federal legislation to the same general effect, including bills that would deport alien radicals. The Strachey case has served to reveal that this is already being done in a good many cases, under rulings of the lower federal courts. Incidentally, one of the worst of the state anti-sedition bills is the one that recently passed the lower house in Georgia. This bill, according to Associated Press reports, would make it a crime to "speak, write or otherwise encourage sentiment intended to undermine democratic governments." The penalty is one to ten years in prison, and possessing five copies of any seditious literature is accepted as evidence that the possessor is circulating it. Georgia, where strikes are broken by the simple expedient of locking up the strike leaders in concentration camps, seems to be making a bid for the place of First American Fascist State.

A NEW record of some sort in the use of judicial machinery to break strikes was made last week in Pennsylvania. A strike is in progress among the coal miners of the Glen Alden Coal Company, the strike having been called by the United Anthracite Miners of Pennsylvania, a new union opposed to the United Mine Workers of America. Twenty-nine of the leaders of the new union were ordered to call off the strike, and when they refused, twenty-six of them (all the police could catch) were put in jail for contempt of court. There, we assume, they had ample leisure to reflect upon the fact that civil liberties are impaired in Russia, and that America is the land of freedom.

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IN LAST week's issue of The New Republic we reprinted two lists of questions that have recently been addressed to Huey Long, with the remark that at the time of going to press he had answered neither. One of these lists was prepared by The New York Post and the other by The New Republic. Before our issue reached its readers Senator Long had replied to The New York Post's list of questions with a lengthy letter in his own defense. To the charge that he has acted the dictator in Louisiana, he returned a far from convincing blanket denial. He admits grave irregularities in the election of 1932, but consoles himself with the reflection that they were committed by both sides. Challenged to explain why he has not put through in Louisiana the child-labor amendment, old-age pensions, minimum wages or unemployment insurance, Long replies that he has passed laws for a debt moratorium, the abolition of the poll tax, free textbooks for children, free night schools for adults, good roads, etc. He says that in the national congress he has supported minimum-wage and unemployment legislation and the abolition of child labor, and that he thinks these things ought to be done on a national scale. He brushes aside the old-age pensions now in force in many states as being nothing but "pauper laws," and calls attention to the one proposed in the "Share Our Wealth" movement. Charged by The Post with having used the state machinery of Louisiana to break strikes, Long flatly denies this, says that it was not state but federal machinery that was used for this purpose, and that he now has the complete endorsement of the American Federation of Labor.

LONG'S reply is a politician's shrewd defense of himself, though it reveals amazing ignorance. He apparently does not know that the state of Wisconsin has unemployment insurance at present, or that sixteen states now have minimum-wage laws, or that twenty-eight states have old-age pensions that are far more satisfactory than the pauper law of Louisiana. He even professes not to know how his friend Governor Talmadge of Georgia broke the textile strike by putting the strike leaders into concentration camps. The Senator's excuses for himself do not, after all, explain the fundamental fact that he has been in absolute control of his state for seven years, and that Louisiana still remains one of the most backward in the Union. We now reprint the questions The New Republic has asked Senator Long to answer, and hope for a reply.

1. If you limited wealth to $5,000,000 a person, could enough be taken from those above this amount to give everyone a minimum of $5,000?

If the answer is yes, upon what statistics or economic studies do you base your conclusions?

If the answer is no, where would the extra wealth come from?

2. Is there a problem of producing more wealth than we do now in order that everybody may have enough?

3. What would have to be done to the economic system in order to produce enough, and avoid depression?

4. Are you in favor of public ownership of the means of production?

5. How do you propose to get the capitalists to accept your plan?

6. With what industries would you begin your scheme of reorganization?

7. What is there to prevent your movement from turning into fascism?

MR. Samuel Untermyer has never in his life shown any great understanding of fundamental economic forces; and his weakness in this field was particularly in evidence in his suggestion this week that all our problems can be solved by a federal sales tax of two percent, to be shared equally between the federal government and the municipalities where it was collected. Mr. Untermyer believes that such a tax would provide enormous amounts of revenue, would avoid the necessity of other types of taxation, would relieve the uncertainty of business men, and would thus end the depression. The last part of this is pure nonsense. The only real reason business men do not go ahead is because they do not see orders in sight. The reason orders are not in sight is because the great mass of consumers, the overwhelming majority of whom are poor people, do not have the income with which to buy. A sales tax directly decreases this consumer purchasing power, which is already too small; it is paid, on the whole, by persons who spend practically their entire income for consumer goods; if they must pay two percent more, they are forced to buy two percent less. The sales tax, now so widely popular throughout the United States, owes its popularity to the fact that it bears most heavily on the class in the population that is least able to make effective protest. It taxes the poor and lets the rich escape. In this process, it helps to continue the depression. Perhaps Mr. Untermyer likes the depression; but we don't.

MAJOR C. H. Douglas, the father of Social Credit, has just been made reconstruction advisor to the government of Alberta, Canada. Presumably, his appointment is for the purpose of enabling him to put his theories into operation, in so far as this is possible in a single province. We shall now have a chance to see whether the Douglas plan is so efficient that it can produce improvement even under these extremely limited and special conditions. We promise our readers to watch and report the results.

IT WOULD be a mistake to read too much significance into the fact that the British birth rate has risen slightly, for the first time in many years. It seems probable that this increase is connected with the betterment of business conditions during the past year or so, an improvement that actually existed, though far less substantial than is commonly believed. It is reasonable to assume that a certain number of people who have been waiting through

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the depression to get married are now doing so; and that some couples who have felt they could not afford a baby are now taking the risk. There is no reason to believe, however, that the phenomenon is more than temporary. Throughout almost the entire world, the trend of the birth rate is still steadily downward. The most desperate efforts of dictators like Mussolini and Hitler, for example, have failed to stop the process. Mussolini has made birth control illegal, he has put taxes on bachelors, he has given state assistance to the parents of large families, and in spite of all this, the Italian birth rate continues to decline about one point per annum.

UNTIL the recent British figures were published, only one of the thirty-seven leading countries of the world showed any increase in the birth rate since 1928. This is Rumania, and it is more than likely that the seeming increase can be explained by recently improved reporting of vital statistics. In the Philippines, the high birth rate has remained stationary for the past five years. In every other important country, according to statistics gathered by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, there has been a steady and in some cases a rapid decline. In Chile, for example, the decrease since 1928 has been 21.6 percent. In Australia, the decline has been 20.7 percent, and in Germany, 18.8 percent. Contrary to the general impression, the French birth rate is now larger than that of Germany, and while both of them are declining, the German rate is going down four times as fast as the French. Indeed, in 1932, the German birth rate was the lowest in the world except that of Sweden. These facts are of course known to government officials, and they may throw some light upon recent military developments. More than one of the Great Powers must look forward to a time, eighteen or twenty years hence, when the number of men available for military duty will be sharply reduced.

IT IS a striking fact that the birth rate is going down in Catholic countries just about as rapidly as in Protestant ones. Among the former are Chile, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Argentina and Uruguay. In the United States, little difference can be seen in the statistics for Catholic or Protestant areas. In this country, the birth rate is markedly lower in the industrial areas than in the agricultural ones. Only nine countries in the world now have a lower birth rate than our own, and ours is 28 percent below the average for the thirty-seven countries listed. (The rate of increase in a population is of course based upon the difference between the birth and death rates; it is possible for a country to have a high birth rate without a correspondingly rapid growth of population if the death rate is abnormally large.) In the state of Rhode Island, the statisticians report, the birth and death rates are expected to balance each other in about the year 1938, and the population will then become stationary, or will begin to decline, unless it is affected by interstate migration. In a number of other states the same thing will happen in the course of the next few years.

THE money to begin execution of the program drawn up by the Mississippi Valley Committee and described by Stuart Chase in his article "Old Man River" on page 175 of this issue of The New Republic seems about to be appropriated. But no one should think on this account that it is all over but the shouting. What the Committee has given us is not an operating plan; it is the demonstration, in some detail, of the need for a plan. Next, the work must be taken up by a real planning agency, if serious progress is to be made. The necessary projects must be listed in order of time and importance; it must be decided what to do first, second, third and so on; responsibility for the various undertakings must be delegated to the executive units that are appropriate, whether national or state; a time schedule must be adopted; resources of money, men, materials must be estimated and allocated. If and when this is done, we shall also need an accompanying political and economic plan. What legal authorizations are required? What interests and legal rights stand in the way? How shall they be overcome? Mr. Roosevelt has so often played the part of the King of France with twenty thousand men that it seems almost too much to hope that, having marched up the hill, he will not march down again.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Erskine Caldwell is the most distinguished modern novelist to come out of Georgia, his native state has never hailed his writings with any great enthusiasm. Going to the poor whites of the backwods and pine barrens for material, rejecting the moonlight and magnolias of the plantation tradition, his books have aroused the anger and resentment of many Georgians. He was charged with an excessively lurid imagination and with creating a race of subhumans the like of which was never seen in Tobacco Road or elsewhere. Recently Mr. Caldwell, reëxamining Governor Talmadge's domain in a series of articles for The New York Post, reported conditions equal to anything described in his books. Thereupon The Chronicle, a morning newspaper published in Augusta, Georgia, decided to conduct an investigation of its own. It sent two members of its staff into the immediate rural districts to discover the true nature of affairs. The reporters returned, not with a clean bill of health, but with evidence substantiating many of Caldwell's charges—and, what is perhaps the most surprising feature of the entire incident, The Chronicle published their findings.

> What we have seen, coupled with the information we have obtained from other sources, leads to the conclusion that there exist families in utter need of rehabilitation. . . . The number of these families in the so-called Sand Hill section of the county is variously estimated from 10 to 12 to 35. . . . Regardless of the

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> figure, maximum or minimum, it is still true that the persons referred to by Erskine Caldwell form a portion of the population of Jefferson County. Most of these people are not only poor but wretched. . . . There are some instances of dire degeneration. . . . On one occasion, a doctor who was questioned said, he answered a call to one of these families late at night. He was surprised to see all members of the family rush to the door fully clothed. Immediately he suspected they were not in the habit of undressing and he asked how often his patient had a bath and a change of clothes. "About once a month," was the reply.

The Chronicle points out, with entire truthfulness, that the people described, like Jeeter Lester, are not "typical" of the average Georgia tenant farmer. But Mr. Caldwell, if we have read his books correctly, does not intend his shiftless patriarch to be considered "typical" in that sense of the word, but rather "representative" of a certain section of Southern society. Charges of undue exaggeration against him may now be dropped. The investigation of The Chronicle has definitely established that there are Jeeter Lesters in the world and that something should be done to remedy the conditions under which they are forced to live. We congratulate The Chronicle, not only for conducting its investigation, but for its courage in publishing its conclusions.

Europe's Tragedy: Act II

THERE is today no reason to be more apprehensive of war than when Hitler assumed power in Germany, but the chance of ultimate war is as strong now as it was then: it is as certain as anything can be in an unpredictable world. The Nazi movement was largely nourished on hostility to the League of Nations and the Versailles Treaty, on a demand for German rearmament and on the plan to try to recapture territory that Germany had lost, and probably more as well. Hitler wasted no time in withdrawing from the League and beginning secret rearmament. Now he feels the time is ripe to flout the Versailles Treaty openly, first by militarizing the commercial air force and second by installing conscription and announcing the intention to maintain a larger army than can be achieved by France.

The British note preceding Sir John Simon's delayed visit to Berlin is a weak, futile gesture. Britain had already consented, it argues, to negotiate with Germany concerning a revision of the treaty to permit German rearmament on a basis of equality, and in combination with a new system of security pacts. Hitler rudely interposed a unilateral action on armament, presenting the Allies with a *fait accompli*. This was not in accord with fair play and ethics; nevertheless Sir John will still consult if Germany will do verbal homage to the original program. But of course Hitler did not want to accept only what the Allies were willing to give him; it was of the essence of his plans that he should take what he wanted whether they consented or not, because only by so doing could he be prepared to take what he further wanted. This action is as plain a warning as anybody could ask that if, before the time comes, the Allies do not consent to German territorial enlargement, Hitler will take that also.

There is a disposition in some quarters, ably seconded by Göbbels' own comment, to regard this latest action with relief, since it brings into the open that which was formerly known by the Allies but not admitted by Germany. The difficulty surrounding German equality in arms has been settled; if France, Great Britain and Italy now bow before the inevitable, Germany may come back into the League on equal terms and of her own free will, and a more healthy atmosphere of coöperation may surround the efforts to solve Europe's problems. More fatuous optimism is scarcely conceivable. Even the relatively simple problem of disarmament is now hopelessly confused; France will never consent to dispense with a single soldier so long as the German army is larger than hers. And have those who talk in this vein forgotten what Germany wants an army for? How do they think the Powers can agree to Hitler's ambitions in the Polish Corridor, in the Baltic states, in Austria and elsewhere? Hitler has ruthlessly performed so far every promise he made in the realm of international relations before he came to power. Why should he stop short of his goal? A prosperous, contented Germany might forget the delusive and empty aim of conquering territory and peoples, but it is impossible that Germany can achieve or perpetuate prosperity and contentment in view of Hitler's internal economic program and the obstacles interposed by capitalistic nationalism in the rest of the world.

Even if Hitler comes back into the League, he and the forces behind him will have their eyes firmly fixed on further conquests. The nations that fear him will never voluntarily relinquish an inch of land. Hitler would probably prefer to make his advances peaceably rather than incur the risks of war; in that sense the protestations of his ministers in favor of peace are sincere. In any case he would not want to fight before he was ready, or against a united world. If he rejoins the League, he will use the respite to gain a more favorable position, in both diplomatic and military ways. Whether he rejoins or not, there will probably now ensue a duel of wits; the Germans trying to split their opponents by playing them off against one another, by attempting to buy off this one or that one; the other nations that have most to lose trying to weld a ring about Germany so solid and formidable that Hitler will not dare to attack it at any point. The only hope the former Allies entertain of keeping the peace is to maintain the status quo by a threat of overwhelming force. This, in our opinion, is no hope at all; when force confronts force and will confronts will too long, conflict is sure to break out. One side or the other, having come to believe it inevitable, will seize what it thinks is a favorable moment. War

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can come though nobody really wants it, simply because the nations will not pay the price for peace.

This is no time for moral judgment; the nations that are not pots are kettles. If the Allies had not forced upon Germany the iniquitous Versailles Treaty, or if they had kept their own mutual promise to disarm, or if they had not tried to collect the impossible sum of reparations, or if they had been able to implement that section of the Treaty making possible peaceable readjustment in its terms, or if they had known how to maintain international prosperity in which Germany had a full share, they probably never would have had a Hitler to deal with. He was made nearly inevitable by their own acts. Having created him, they could literally do nothing to avoid the consequences. Concessions were sure to encourage further demands, on the ground that what had been denied to weakness was now yielded to strength and bluster. Preparations against him, such as the security pacts and the increased armaments, could only solidify his internal support. The world of capitalistic nationalism that made the War and the peace has, as if in a Greek tragedy, raised up the fury that will destroy it.

Stable European peace can never arise except on the basis of European federalism, and this can come only if the nations develop an economic and social system that does not need to seek aggression abroad or try to safeguard its own citizens at the expense of sacrifices imposed upon others. That an international revolution leading to such a system can be expected before war breaks out is extremely unlikely. We can only hope fervently that it will spring out of the war itself. If so, humanity may escape a new regression to barbarism.

Holmes on Strachey

THERE is more than empty symbolism in the fact that scarcely had Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes been given his last honors by a sorrowing nation when the executives of that same nation arrested John Strachey for deportation. For by the latter act they cast aside the intellectual legacy which it was Justice Holmes's intent to leave us, and sought to deny him the kind of immortality that he most desired. In his opinion in the Abrams case, Holmes rendered the perfect judgment on attempts to outlaw the expression of unorthodox belief:

> . . . When men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they have come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes can be carried out. That, at any rate, is the theory of our Constitution. It is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year if not every day we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon uncertain knowledge. While that experiment is part of our system, I think we should be eternally vigilant against the attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country. . . .

Mr. Hearst and the authorities in the administration who follow his lead apparently do not believe in free trade in ideas or think that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted. Holding that the truth resides in adherence to a capitalist system, they do not have confidence that capitalism can withstand the test of criticism by a Marxist. So weak is their trust, both in the constitutional doctrine of free speech and in capitalist institutions, that they think Communist theories are particularly dangerous when expressed by foreign agitators and lecturers, as if Americans had become so befuddled in the mind or gelatinous in the will as to fall an easy prey to anyone from abroad. Either they believe all this, or, accepting Holmes's doctrine, they think that our traditional civilization is now in such peril of imminent destruction that an "immediate check" on the lecturer from Oxford is "required to save the country." A cause that has to be so badly served is already lost.

No doubt the Department of Labor will strive to hide its colossal blunder under some technicality, for instance, as to whether Strachey told the truth in saying that he was not a Communist when he entered the country. But this technical question loses all meaning unless it is first assumed that if he had said he was a Communist, they would have excluded him, and would have done so justifiably. The main issue must be pressed home, for the simple reason that the arrest of Mr. Strachey and the reaction against it dramatize the cases of many more obscure men and women, persons who through lack of social prominence have not had, or will not have, so many or such powerful defenders. If Strachey is deported, Hearst and the other enemies of the best in American tradition will have won a major victory in their campaign against free and intelligent discussion.

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Old Man River

IN RELEASING the reports of the National Resources Board and of the Mississippi Valley Committee in January, President Roosevelt said: "These documents constitute a remarkable foundation for what we hope will be a permanent policy of orderly development in every part of the United States. I have asked the Congress for four billion dollars. A substantial portion of this sum will be used for objectives suggested in these reports."

The four billions will presently be in his official checkbook—$4,880,000,000 to be exact.[1] The reports lie on his desk. The conjunction is unprecedented if not miraculous. For twenty years I have been reading beautiful reports—done up with maps, colored diagrams, little square men representing 1,000,000 farmers and little square men split in two representing 500,000 farmers, zigzag charts and lush, lovely tables—telling with great detail and often with profound wisdom what ought to be done to make mankind happier on the land it so ardently buys and sells. But, in the back of my mind, the question grew more insistent, more devastating: Why not read a detective story? These are fine plans but nobody is ever going to do anything about them. Brain food for intellectuals, like chicken food for chickens.

And now along comes Morris Cooke, an engineer who has been in the little-man business for years, only he preferably uses little zigzags, each symbolizing 10,000,000 kilowatts or so. The report of the Mississippi Valley Committee, of which he was chairman, is the best report I have ever seen in any language on the intelligent use of land, water and resources for the enjoyment of mankind. I read it from cover to cover, then got up and cheered. And so what? A rousing cheer, and a nice dark library shelf, world without end, amen . . . buried with all the other hand-illumined reports on planning.

By the Eternal, no! Slapped on the table of the most powerful executive on earth, and five billion iron men—count 'em—stacked up on top of it. Five billion dollars; ten billion man-hours of work, first and last, more or less. "A substantial portion of this sum will be used for objectives suggested in this report."

Here we have, then, not only the best report I have ever laid eyes on, but the promise of millions of man-hours of work to translate its printed recommendations into tangible realities. What did Mr. Cooke and his engineers find in the Mississippi Valley? What do they demand of Old Man River? This book is live stuff—wheelbarrow, cement mixer, steam dredge, generator, combine, power-line stuff; library dust does not gather here. Indeed it may be that dust will be blown from the tops of some of the older planning documents. Mayor LaGuardia is now asking for a billion dollars for New York City, basing his projects on the Russell Sage study, exhumed after some years of rigor mortis. If American civilization is to continue; if the heavy industries cannot absorb the unemployed at the old rate, then public works must take the place of the flywheel of capitalism. This means either raking leaves from East to West and back to East again, or it means following carefully developed blueprints for the creation of new social wealth—for real capital, rather than phoney capital like unrentable skyscrapers.

Outlined in the report is the domain of Old Man River, the midriff, the very bowels, of the nation. It comprises five great drainage basins, the Upper Mississippi, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Southwest, the Lower Mississippi. The Missouri Basin alone exceeds the area of Germany, France and Italy combined. Forty-nine million Americans live in the Great Valley, on 1,235,000 square miles of land—when not under water floods. Here grow the great staple crops: wheat, corn, cotton, rye; here hogs and beeves are fattened for a continental market; here are huge deposits of coal, iron ore, copper, oil; a forest coverage once vast, now dwindling. One can grow giddy with the statistical wealth of the Mississippi Basin. But a conversation I had the other day with an old-timer from St. Louis is a good specific for giddiness. "No, sir, I wouldn't go back there again. I can't stand it; it breaks me all up. Last time was the last. Why, I remember when that Valley was a paradise: fat farms, bursting barns, neat painted houses, smiling people, prosperous, happy. It was a pleasure to go up and down from state to state with a horse and wagon. Now what do you find? Misery, unpainted houses, no more smiles, floods, pollution, erosion, patched fences, pep meetings by tin-horn Chambers of Commerce. Sure, there are more roads, automobiles, radios and movie palaces, but what are they? A lick of paint on a rotten flooring. That Valley used to be rich. Rich for people to live in, common folks. Now it may be rich for some Easterners, but it's poor to live in. I wouldn't be found dead in it; the heart's gone out of it. Something has made a hell out of what was paradise once. What spoiled it, mister?"

What spoiled it, Mr. Cooke? I pass the old-timer's question on. I know you will not grow emotional about it as he did. Has the heart gone out of Old Man River? Is he destined to line his banks

[1] At the present writing, the sum he will get, and the terms thereof, is a matter of acrimonious debate in Congress.

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with peasants like the Hwang Ho; grateful for a cupful of cereal a day? Can people be happy there again?

> A large portion of the agricultural land in the Basin has lost from three to six inches of top soil, and no less than 25 percent of the tilled lands have actually been stripped to the subsoil. About five percent has reached the gullying stage, and has been permanently ruined for agricultural use. Four hundred million dollars a year is a conservative estimate of the tangible loss to the whole United States.

First comes sheet erosion, often imperceptible except for a slight change in the color of the soil and a mysterious loss in fertility. Then "shoe-string" erosion, cracks and wrinkles across the fields. Finally gully erosion, like the last stages of an incurable disease:

> During this process the standard of living of those dependent on the land is lowered progressively. There is an increase of farm tenantry, tax delinquency, bankruptcies and land abandonment. The income of the whole community is lessened. There is a failure to maintain public institutions and public improvements, a progressive disintegration of the population, lowering of the morale of the people, increase of distress, and dependency on state or federal relief. . . . Once smiling regions become a desolate testimonial to man's folly.

Even in the Delta region, where rich soils are capable of supporting a prosperous rural society, 80 percent of all operatives now are tenant farmers.

Erosion on the upper valleys means floods on the great rivers down below. In the Yazoo area in the Delta, where levees have been built on both sides of a stream, cases are on record when, in times of dangerous floods, people living on one side of the river have dynamited the levee *on the other side* in order to release the pent-up water and thus lessen the danger to their own property.

Seventy-five percent of all tilled land in the United States is losing fertility by erosion. Soil that has taken a thousand years and more to build up is now washing into rivers at the rate of 1,500,000,000 tons a year, there to choke channels, reservoirs, irrigation canals with silt. Degeneration comes from tilling over steep slopes; from one-crop farming—especially of corn, cotton and tobacco, which need cultivation between the rows; from lack of adequate terracing; from forest-fire injury; from overgrazing by livestock. Here is a 3.7-percent slope on Shelby loam soil studied for six years by the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station. On bare land, the rate of movement of soil was 34.8 tons per acre per year—down to the sea. In continuous corn, the rate was 17.7 tons; in continuous wheat, 6.6 tons; in a rotation of corn, wheat and clover the rate drops to 2.8 tons; in sod grass, only .3 tons.

To water erosion we must add wind erosion—a very serious factor today in the dry and windswept portions of the Valley. It is due primarily to wasteful methods of tillage. In the great duststorm of May, 1934, soil was carried east 1,500 miles to blot out the sun in some cities on the Atlantic coast. "Unless vigorous public action to check soil erosion is initiated at once, on a scale commensurate with the real situation, it will be too late to save vast areas of our most productive land from permanent depletion."

> The ideal river, which would have a uniform flow, does not exist in nature. Something has to be done to equalize the flow, or take advantage of variations in flow, if the stream is to resemble even remotely an ideal river. The problem of control involves not only the physical nature of the stream, but the often conflicting claims of various uses and various users. Scientific planning requires a use pattern for each community, district or region, as well as a geographical pattern that will reflect as fairly as possible the dominant needs of each locality. The same principle must hold when we attempt to prevent a river system from doing damage. There is no one method of flood control that is applicable to the entire Mississippi system. The improvement of natural channels; the building of reservoirs—sometimes well adapted for purposes of irrigation and power; the construction of levees, reforestation, and a change in certain areas from tilled crops to grass crops, may all play a part in slowing down the rush of water to the sea, or in keeping it away from cities, towns and valuable lands. Floods pay no attention to political jurisdiction. Any coördinated system of control will demand the coöperation of neighboring states with each other and with the federal government.

There are almost 13,000 miles of navigable channels in the Mississippi system—some of them monuments to the congressional pork barrel. Wild fowl squawk in angry astonishment when a battered scow churns their silent waters. Some of them are of sound use for the passage of people and things, and a grave cause of distress to railway presidents. The stricken officials beckon to their sanctums professional jackals—accountants, economists, professors—precisely as the Power Trust beckoned them under Mr. Insull, and for all I know beckons them today. Feverishly they set to work computing the "hidden costs" of these waterways, to the end that they too shall be left to the wild fowl, if any, while the railroads snatch the freight. I have been inspecting these hidden-cost schedules lately, and from the standpoint of public interest they are about as straight as a Kreuger gold bond. The report takes no sides in this century-old controversy. It is content to point out where waterways are a public service and where they are not. On the whole it is bearish on further developments.

Of 16,000,000 potential kilowatts of power in the Valley, only 2,000,000 have been developed.

> If coördination is taken as the key, we see the unfortunate effects of the present set-up in a power map which shows a mass of independent, unrelated units. Congested areas have more installed power than their inhabitants can utilize under present conditions; other

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> areas, especially the rural ones, have little or no electric service, and there is a general underconsumption of power. . . . The federal government should regulate transmission, regardless of the number of generating plants or transmission lines it may ultimately own.

Beyond this lies the great task of rural electrification, the need for which is shown by the fact that only one in ten of the nation's farms, only one in sixteen of those in the Valley, buys electricity from power lines.

About 40 percent of the land of the Valley was once forested. Some 20 percent rated as forest land remains, but the rating is optimistic. A large portion consists of cut-over lands or second growth. "Private ownership as a means of maintaining the forests in productive condition has broken down." Some 25 percent of the National Forests lie in the Valley, to a total of 165,000,000 acres. States and local-government units own 11,000,000 acres more. The Forest Service has recently recommended that an additional 225,000,000 acres be acquired. Mere ownership, however, is not enough. There must be protection from fire, insects, diseases; scientific planting programs, erosion control, continuing research. A healthy forest cover not only is the lumber supply of the future, but is mandatory for regulation of stream flow and the prevention of excessive erosion. When an area is denuded, run-off promptly increases.

The "ground-water table" is the level at which water normally lies beneath the surface. A fall in this table is a serious matter for 95 percent of the population of the Valley, which lacks access to the water supply of great cities. In the easterly, more humid parts of the Valley, there is no evidence that the table has dropped, but in parts of the western watershed there is an alarming shrinkage. Questionnaires were received from 1,482 well drillers in these regions. The data indicated that during average periods ranging from ten to forty-four years there has been a ground-level drop of more than ten feet in Nebraska, Minnesota and the Dakotas, and of somewhat less than that average in Kansas and Missouri. In western North Dakota, the table has dropped twenty feet; on the Missouri-Mississippi Divide in Iowa, from twenty to thirty feet. In South Dakota, there has been a drop of at least forty feet in twenty years. Furthermore, the shrinkage is progressive, like compound interest.

As the table sinks, wells go dry, springs, ponds, lakes, streams shrink or altogether disappear. A declining water table with no decline in rainfall means that water is running down to the sea too fast, because of slaughtered forests and wasteful methods of tillage. Improvements in farming technique have protected neither the land nor the cash position of the farmer. They have made for floods in the Delta and overproduction in the market.

Last fall after the drought I was in central South Dakota. One could take up a handful of black soil, crush it, open his fingers and let the dirt fall out. It left the hand as clean as though one had picked up beach sand. Not an atom of moisture remained. Citizens were quite frank in telling me that their region was through. It could not go back to wheat, the only crop. Some were not sure it could go back to buffalo grass, the original cover, because the water table now lay so deep. The roots would wither before they found it. Fine people, on a dead land.

I have only hinted at the wealth of material, the breadth of approach, the sound sense contained in this report. It falls into two grand divisions: function and geographical area. The first includes a comprehensive survey of flood control, low-water control, navigation, power, erosion, irrigation, forestry, wild-life conservation, precipitation and run-off, ground-water tables, water supply, sanitation, recreation. The second surveys the Valley basin by basin: the Upper Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, Southwest, Lower Mississippi. The report concludes with an authoritative discussion of planning in general, its application to the Valley, and an exciting glimpse of the Valley of the Future—if and when planned.

The opportunities for Mr. Roosevelt to write checks are set forth in detail. The cost of protection against erosion is but a minute fraction of the cost of erosion. A twenty-year federal program, calling for joint action by states, counties, land districts and individual owners, would cost the national government $20,000,000 a year—about five percent of the measurable annual loss. Plans for flood control are worked out basin by basin. To finance the projects, it is suggested that the federal government pay 30 percent of the cost of labor and materials for projects of chief benefit to local communities, and so on up to 100 percent when the project is primarily of national benefit. The same general principles apply to low-water control—where the questions of sewage and pollution become acute. Sometimes a given project may include flood control, low-water control, power development, irrigation, navigation and city water supply—paradise enough for any engineer. In the next two decades, half a billion dollars could be well spent on power installation, and another hundred millions on independent, self-liquidating projects for rural electrification. The report follows the Forest Service in estimating $47,000,000 a year for twenty years for the acquisition and protection of forest cover. Tories, grumbling at public works, say that there is no sound way to spend the money. They had better read this report.

The sun is a great engine, pumping water from the Gulf of Mexico, depositing it as rain and snow over the Mississippi Valley, where gravity takes it in charge, and down it slides, by gulleys, rivulets, brooks, subsoil waters, little rivers, big rivers, the Father of Rivers, to the Gulf again—a never ending hydrologic cycle. In the functioning of that cycle, men live. Failing it, their lands are deserts

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and they die. Land, water and people go together. Food control, erosion and low-water control, navigation, hydro-electric power, water supply and sanitation are integral parts of the picture, and they tie in to agriculture, irrigation, forestry, recreation, the conservation of wild life.

> A drainage basin, big or little, is a region through which water moves. No act of man can permanently halt this flow of power, nor even diminish it to an appreciable degree. The water must come down—we could not stop it if we would. We can, however, figuratively as well as literally, canalize it so that it will do what we want it to do and will not do what we do not want it to do. . . . Engineering does not exist for its own sake. It is of little use to control rivers if we cannot thereby improve the quality of human living. Therefore, the final and most significant element that the Committee has considered is neither land nor water, but the people who live on the land and who are dependent on the water.

Here is the whole report in a nutshell, its philosophy, its objective, its method. Observe there is no cringing to a business motive; no specification that this engineering project or the other will be good for shippers, for property owners, for commercial expansion, for all the bastard claims of a bastard acquisitive culture. This report is for people who live on the land and are dependent on the water, not for those who live on land speculation and use water primarily for balance-sheet purposes.

An acquisitive economy has thrust greedy hands into the hydrologic cycle. Forests have been heedlessly butchered, soils denuded of their fertility; the resulting floods have reached unprecedented heights, the low-water periods unprecedented lows (like the business cycle), navigation has been neglected here and gorgeously overexpanded there (like the housing of Megalopolis), water powers have run to waste, and when developed, the power map shows "a crazy patchwork of operating areas"; wild life has been decimated, great areas rendered fetid with the untreated sewage of cities. Another generation of the strenuous pursuit of the main chance, and it is safe to say that Old Man River would roar in lonely majesty, rid of that dirty animal *homo sapiens*, his waters clean at last.

You poor damned fools: do you think a great river system is only a mechanism with which to turn an honest penny? The water will come down; slow and beneficial if you hold the run-offs with adequate forests, terraces, crop rotations; swift and terrible if you neglect them. You have neglected them for a century, many an honest penny has been turned and spent in Chicago, New York, Paris. Now Old Man River presents his bill. You will have to pay it or be thrown into bankruptcy—the bankruptcy of a vast river culture. This report indicates how the bill may be paid; the only way it may be paid: by planning, by subjugating private interest to public, by reviving that life which the old-timer thought was lost. Fortunately it is not too late. Not quite.

STUART CHASE.

Response of the Gentle Scholars

"Now the public libraries, particularly the Forty-second Street one, are simply loathsome. All the chairs in the Magazine Room and Newspaper Room are filled with down-and-outers, the overflow from Bryant Park and Central. All the marble seats on the stairs are filled with more down-and-outers, their feet swathed in newspapers. Besides the down-and-outers, Communists with mops of hair like black moss gabble in the corridors, or engage in amorous dalliance on the stairs. . . . I think it is the smell I resent the most rather than the actual presence of these people, nauseating as that is. . . . Open the Morgan Library and who will throng its halls, pushing the gentle scholars away, ruining the silence for readers to whom Shelley, Pope and Ben Jonson are not dehumanized? The ragtail and bob-tail. The rabble. The down-and-outers. The feeble-minded. . . . Interesting to a historian, perhaps, but not to a bibliophile longing for the gentle peace that is to be found only in woods and libraries."—From a letter to The Saturday Review of Literature.

They reach you then, the brave, the grim,
  Like mediums murmuring from swoons
In chambers moldy, close and dim,
  Where Cromwell or Napoleon croons,
Becoming as a little child:
  "This place is peaceful! never fear!"
Shakespeare, Mark Twain and Oscar Wilde
  Declare, "We are so happy here!"
They lull you then, they leave you calm:
  Ben Jonson's harshness and Pope's hate?
You never flush nor feel a qualm
  At Shelley's rage against the State?

We gentle students of the dead,
  We've known them long and marked them well
Who seek among the books a bed,
  Unshaven, shoeless, foul to smell;
And marked you others, better shod,
  Among the books who beg to creep
To planes of being chaste but odd:
  Nor literature nor life nor sleep.
But we, alas!—we mayn't ignore,
  Among the books, that you, poor friends,
And they have both been seen before
  In junctures doomed to desperate ends,
Wherein you did perforce endure
  —So Time's depressing record tells—
Much tumult, much discomfiture,
  And even more distressing smells.
For you and us and all we cherished,
  "Silence" was "ruined" then indeed—
And even libraries have perished,
  From bibliophiles who failed to read.

EDMUND WILSON.

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The Foreign Agitator

An Old American Institution

THOSE Americans who, like Mr. Will Rogers, only know what they read in the papers, will have realized now that the upheavals in San Francisco last summer were the work of foreign agitators. They are learning that the troubles in Minneapolis, the Imperial Valley, Chicago, Portland or wherever else they may appear also are communist-inspired. Further testimony was offered in the textile strike when Governor Green of Rhode Island warned the General Assembly on September 13 that Rhode Island, like San Francisco, faced a "Communist uprising," while New England newspapers suggestively pointed out how much of the recent violent disorders here as elsewhere "may be properly ascribed to the activity of deportable aliens."[1]

Some of us may have expected a little more originality by 1935. But apparently our industrial Jack Horners everywhere find that the familiar tactic still yields plums greatly to their liking: You sit tight in your comfortable corner confronting a strike, you put in your thumb, pull out a foreign agitator, and say, "What a good American boy am I!" Then you mobilize vigilantes, Legionnaires, policemen and other custodians of property rights, in the name of which you smash printing presses, offices, halls, homes and heads. Finally you bring the issue into politics, elect several true-blue conservatives with the help of several good red (perish the color) herrings, and think complacently of the Revolutionary Fathers.

Vigilantes, of course, do not read history, or even they might be given pause to realize how ancient a dodge it really is. More than a century ago, their forbears rushed to defend America against the foreign menaces hidden in demands for a ten-hour day and free public schools; and invariably after (and before) they have maintained similar guard against such threats to our treasured traditions. In April, 1825, the Boston carpenters struck for a ten-hour day. The United States of America then was not quite thirty-seven years old. There had been little immigration since the mid-eighteenth century. The families of these immigrants had now been in America for nearly a century. However, none of these facts prevented employers from quickly scenting the foreign threat to American traditions when their workers first asked for a ten-hour day.

The twelve to fifteen-hour day, let it be admitted, still was in the then existing American tradition. Emerging industry simply took over the working day of the prevailing agricultural life. Men worked from sunrise to sunset and the industrious habits of the sun-to-sun day on their farms and in their homes had been invested by Puritan America "with the sacred character of a moral, if not a religious, precept."[2] Therefore when the workers began to protest the effects of this fixed custom in wage labor they spoke a new language. As citizens of a democracy, they demanded leisure for the self-training and education that would help them perform intelligently the duties of their citizenship. As wage workers, they found that the sun-to-sun system entailed an insecure, irregular life. For employers, paying wages by the day, naturally sought to concentrate work as far as possible in the long days of late spring, summer and early fall, when they could require their men to work from twelve to fifteen hours. This meant both intense physical strain during the summer and widespread unemployment in the winter. Accordingly, when their employers refused to agree with the Boston carpenters "that ten hours' faithful labor shall hereafter constitute a day's work,"[3] they precipitated what Mr. David J. Saposs calls "one of the most notable strikes in American labor history."[4]

Like our contemporary opponents of workers' rights, those early employers stood aghast before the proposed "departure from the salutary and steady usages which have prevailed in this city, and all New England, from time immemorial."[5] They shuddered over the potential demoralization threatened the workers by the leisure that would be left them after working from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., with time out for meals—the doors thus opened wide to "idleness and vice" . . . the "degraded state" that would replace the happiness and prosperity yielded "the Mechanical Classes by frugal, orderly, temperate and ancient habits."[6] They worried over the "unhappy influence" of the proposed reform upon the young apprentices and child laborers "by seducing them from that course of industry and economy of time" to which they, their employers, were anxious to "enure them."[7] All in all, as they contemplated the "unnatural production," they could not believe "this project to have originated with any of the faithful and industrious Sons of

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[1] The Boston Transcript, September 14, 1934, p. 1.

[2] John R. Commons and Associates: History of Labor in the United States. Vol I, p. 174.

[3] Ibid, p. 159.

[4] Ibid, p. 158.

[5] Ibid, p. 160, from Documentary History of American Industrial Society. Vol. VI, pp. 79-81.

[6] Ibid, p. 161, from Documentary History of American Industrial Society. Vol. VI, pp. 79-81.

[7] Ibid, p. 160, from Documentary History of American Industrial Society. Vol. VI, pp. 76, 77.

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New England, but are compelled to consider it an evil of foreign growth. . . ."[8]

Again when various factors after 1825 led the American workers of the day to try political action to win improvements in their conditions, politicians, newspaper editors and industrialists saw once more foreign agitators gestating crimes that make even the best horrors of our modern Red Scares seem mere gentle lapses. The movement for universal white male suffrage was fast gaining headway, and in state after state the removal of property and other qualifications upon the right to vote and hold office was admitting the workers to the electorate.

Leaders of the existing political parties were not slow in seeking to win the enfranchised workers for their own purposes. But they were not the only ones who recognized what a valuable acquisition the workers would make to any cause that could win their political allegiance. Reformers and radicals like George Henry Evans, Frances Wright and Robert Dale Owen also wooed them. Evans and Owen had been born in England, Frances Wright in Scotland. Evans was an early formulator of that American agrarianism which eventually created the Homestead Act in 1862; Frances Wright, disciple of the French Revolution, was an advocate of Negro freedom, women's rights, experimental community associations, rationalism and numerous other radicalisms of the day; Robert Dale Owen, son of his father in many ways, added to Owenism a convinced faith in universal education through free public schools under a "state guardianship" that would provide children with food, clothing and a rounded manual-cultural training. Thus they were both foreign and radical, these agitators, as are some of our contemporary ones today; and though the workingmen's parties time and again publicly renounced their doctrines, labor's indigenous programs became "agrarianism," "infidelism," "communism," etc., etc.

And what were the official demands of these early workingmen's parties behind which their opponents saw lurking such foreign menaces? They were fighting for free public schools, abolition of imprisonment for debts, equality of rich and poor before the law, abolition of "the compulsory militia system which penalized the rich for non-attendance with a fine and the poor with imprisonment,"[9] equal taxation, the reform of a banking system that was permitting wage payment in banknotes of doubtful value, and numerous other social reforms that, like the short work day, have by now become proudly accepted "American tradition" since they found their first advocates in this early labor movement.

For all the abuse they were receiving from the self-appointed guardians against foreign agitation, the workers themselves saw their programs entirely in terms of the Americanism of the Declaration of Independence. They framed their propaganda in the language of democracy, equality and freedom. "The objects we have in view," said one group of them, "are hallowed by the sympathy of patriotism —it is the finish of the glorious work of the Revolution."[10] They asked factory legislation to secure to the worker "his right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' on a par with his rich fellow citizens."[11] They sought free public schools—"A REPUBLICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION which shall afford the poorest man's child . . . equal means of instruction with the child of the richest. . . ." because "real liberty and equality have no foundation but in universal and equal instruction."[12] In fact they generally made education their central demand—"the first and most important . . . object for which we are contending" because "This is the rock on which the Temple of moral freedom and independence is founded; any other foundation than this, will prove inadequate to the protection of our liberties, and our republican institutions."[13]

But the defenders of the status quo in the early nineteenth century knew better. As they contemplated these startling programs, they accused the workers repeatedly of advocating "agrarianism and infidelity," of "aiming at an agrarian law for the equal distribution of property and with being leagued with foreigners to overthrow religion and the existing system of government, and a number of other equally absurd projects."[14] They denounced the demand for universal education as "incompatible with the very organization and being of civil society, as a 'dream' not only foreign but ancient in origin—an attempt to revive 'institutions or habits like those of Sparta . . . (embracing even) grand *Republican* female academies, to make *Roman* matrons.'"[15] They saw that "the scheme of universal Equal Education at the expense of the state . . . would be a compulsory application of the means of the richer, for the direct use of the poorer classes; and so for *an arbitrary division of property among them.*"[16] On the floor of the New York Assembly the Workingmen's Party was denounced by a nineteenth-century Senator Lusk as "factionists, more dangerous than any . . . in the days of the French Revolution."[17] When finally the Workingmen's Party in New York suffered a decisive defeat in 1830, that stalwart defender of American tradition, Tammany Hall, gave first voice to the since popular battle cry of sending uncomfortable ideas "back where they came from." It rejoiced that "agrarianism in New York is dead, gone, buried and transported back to England where it originated. . . ."[18]

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8 Idem.

9 Ibid, p. 177.

10 Mechanic's Free Press of Philadelphia, October 24, 1829, Ibid, p. 205.

11 Ibid, p. 178.

12 New York Working Man's Advocate, May 22, 1830. Mechanic's Free Press, January 24, 1829; Ibid, pp. 223 and 224.

13 Mechanic's Free Press, April 17, 1830, Ibid, p. 227.

14 Mechanic's Free Press, February 6, 1830, Ibid, p. 212.

15 National Gazette, July 10, 1830, Ibid, p. 229.

16 National Gazette, August 19, 1930, Ibid, pp. 239-230.

17 New York Working Man's Advocate, March 13, 1830, Ibid, p. 271.

18 Morning Courier and New York Enquirer, November 8, 1830, Ibid, p. 268.

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And if in coming months the workers of our own day find themselves as they attempt to actualize Section 7a damned by the "bad names" of communists, foreign agitators, attackers of American prosperity and American ideals, let them take heart by remembering how a New York newspaper in 1829 pictured the working-class proponents of free public schools and other American institutions now long accepted: These "poor and deluded followers of a crazy atheistical woman" (*i. e.,* Frances Wright) it introduced them, "Lost to society, to earth and to heaven, godless and hopeless, clothed and fed by stealing and blasphemy . . . such are the apostles who are trying to induce a number of able-bodied men in this city to follow in their own course . . . to disturb the peace of the community for a time . . . betake themselves to incest, robbery and murder; die like ravenous beasts, hunted down without pity; and go to render their account before God, whose existence they believed in their miserable hearts, even while they were blaspheming Him in their ignorant, sniveling and puerile speculations."[19]

Thus, at the very dawn of modern wage labor in America was elaborated the pattern of the "alien agitators," those straw men at which employers have ever since been tilting to beat back their workers' struggle for improved conditions. Great strike movements, essays into labor or radical politics, unrest generated by depression or war, persistent efforts to achieve labor organizations, all have seen the foreign radical trotted out by the strategists of stand-pat. In fact, the rapid development of our industrial life enabled them to wring remarkably varied uses out of the "foreigner." For, with this as with so much else, they discovered how to have their cake and eat it too. As early as 1832, workers were protesting the deliberate importation of cheap labor by employers;[20] as time went on the alien contract laborer became a familiar competitor and a familiar strike-breaker too. With that the design was complete: the employers had obtained in the foreigners they themselves so often brought in cheap labor costs, strike-breakers, smoke-screens and scapegoats.

American industrial history, accordingly, echoes continuously the changes rung upon the theme—in the press, in the employers' organizations, in the vigilante corps, even in the courts. When neither the defeat of the ten-hour strike nor of the workingmen's parties during the twenties convinced labor that their group efforts were un-American, during the thirties their employers sought the aid of the courts to persuade them. Judge Edwards did his best in the famous case of the New York tailors, when he proclaimed trade unions not only injurious to industry and the workers themselves, but also "in this favored land of law and liberty" of foreign origin and "mainly upheld by foreigners."[21] If the unionists were not convinced, neither were the employers deterred. They continued to bring in large numbers of common laborers, especially from Ireland, to work on the canals, docks and railroads. In time, these workers struck, and sometimes even rioted, against the low wages and terrible living conditions they confronted. Then leading papers like The New York Journal of Commerce gravely halted their proof that trade unions "were necessary in this country . . . and were made up of foreigners"[22] long enough to tell the heirs of the Boston Tea Party, Shays' Rebellion, the Whiskey Insurrection and Fries' Revolt that riots "are an exotic" phenomenon in America, "which has been imported along with the dregs and scum of the old world that we so much covet."[23] And with this they planted that ever since rooted American conviction that violence in industrial disputes, when employed by the workers, is a foreign product. The hard times and humanitarian movements of the forties naturally furnished texts for many a frightened sermon on the infidelity, free love and anarchy threatened by the phalanxes and communes, the banks of exchange and the associations borrowed from the theorists of Germany, France and Britain. During the fifties, with their continuing large-scale immigration, the terrified nativists organized to "preserve America for Americans," and from pulpit, press and political platform, patriots were rallied against "the dark designs of the revolutionaries who were streaming to our soil intent on overturning our government and our cherished institutions."[24]

The anti-slavery agitation and the Civil War seemed to crowd the foreign agitator off the stage for a time, but it was not long before he reappeared in his familiar role. If the employers took up once more their subsidizing of immigration during the sixties, if they sought cheap labor and strike-breakers abroad for business as usual, if they exempted recent immigrants from the blacklists they circulated among their fellows, and even wrote the alien contract into federal law, they did not fail to recognize the great unemployed riots that startled the country in 1873 as the handiwork of those now historic foreign agitators. As labor gained strength, and the pressure on their standards grew with the rapid disappearance of the frontier and the tremendous industrialization of the time, the unrest of the eighties produced profound upheaval. Then not only the eight-hour strikes were finally routed at Haymarket Square in 1886; the entire labor movement suffered a severe setback. No one ever knew who threw the bomb that fateful fourth of May; but even a less volatile people than the Americans would have been reduced to panic by the hysteria with which court, press and guardians of the peace

19 The Commercial Advertiser, quoted by The New York Working Man's Advocate, November 7, 1829. Ibid, pp. 272-273.

20 Seth Luther, Address to the Workingmen of New England, p. 16, Ibid, p. 174.

21 Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Vol. IV, pp. 325-332. Ibid, I, pp. 409-10.

22 May 31, 1836, Ibid, p. 410.

23 July 18, 1835, Ibid, p. 412.

24 Harry J. Carman: Social and Economic History of the United States, Vol. II, pp. 55-56.

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dilated on the fact that seven of the eight anarchists arrested were aliens—the foreign agitator at his starkest! Nor did it help the workers to turn to politics even behind a leader so peculiarly American in origin and thought as Henry George. Newspapers and politicians steadfastly portrayed the issue as a conflict between American and foreign ideas.

Thus the turn of the century found the foreign agitator himself a securely established American institution. The rise of the I.W.W. offered golden opportunities for its invocation, and the terrifying image of the torch-branding alien glowered forth upon the country from Lawrence, Paterson, Passaic, the Mesaba Range, McKees Rocks and numerous other arenas of conflict. The Great War furnished a new refinement to the old tradition, as the Russian Bolsheviks became for our Tories of the early twentieth century what the French Jacobins had been for their forbears of the early nineteenth. Judge Gary accordingly could strike chords from a product made in America when he affirmed to Senator Kenyon his conviction "that this foreign element," these "outside agitators," these "revolutionaries" precipitated the steel strike of 1919.[25] And if at the same hearings Senator Smith and Lieutenant Van Buren combined to draw the moral, they were distilling not only the Lieutenant's Red investigations in Indiana, but the tactical wisdom of a century. Said Senator Smith (of Georgia) "If we sh pped all the alien agitators and organizers out of the country—," interposed Lieutenant Van Buren, "there would be no more trouble at all."[26] Presumably that is why, when trouble cumulated once more out of our current depression, San Francisco wired Secretary of Labor Perkins to invoke the deportation law.

The employers, then, in our present-day America, where mass immigration has ended, will apparently be no more stumped than were those of 1825 in an America where mass immigration had hardly begun. But from that fact we can take heart, too. For if the foreign agitator proves too valuable a weapon for the stand-patters of mature American industry to relinquish in their defense of "American tradition," it is encouraging to remember that all the foreign agitators whom employers could raise in dawning and developing American industry did not assure their final victory over such "revolutionary, un-American" demands as the ten-hour day, the eight-hour day, factory legislation, better wages and free public schools. History may repeat itself on both sides of the continuing battle.

SYLVIA KOPALD SELEKMAN.

The War in Arkansas

THE HILL people in Western Arkansas are not unknown to the American public. For years writers of folk lore have used their lives as a fountainhead for satirical yarns and amusing anecdotes. During the same period in eastern Arkansas the patient struggle of the white and Negro sharecroppers, day laborers and small farmers remained unknown. They farmed under rules prescribed by the planters, who gradually got possession of large tracts of land and introduced what has now been widely publicized as the plantation system.

This quiet seclusion of eastern Arkansas is no more. During the last few months it has been dramatically, if somewhat rudely, interrupted. In that time the plight of the sharecropper has flared forth in headlines. There have been announcements of beatings, arrests and terrorism. The plantation system and the life of the worker under it is being hastily hung out for public scrutiny.

Before the Civil War, only a few farms dotted the Delta region of eastern Arkansas. Slowly their number increased as more land was cleared by small independent farmers. Then quasi-public agencies were established which greatly affected the further development of the Delta. One was the Levee Board, created to throw up huge dirt banks to keep back the floodwaters of the Mississippi. Later, in the second decade of this century, Drainage Districts were set up to draw off the water from the lowlands. From this time on, the Levee Board and Drainage Districts, as well as the state, placed heavy taxes on the land in return for their services.

The small farmer often found it impossible to make payment. Gradually, therefore, he was crowded out in favor of the big landlord, who was in a better position to pay and to resist foreclosure even if he were behind in his three-way taxes. Steadily, therefore, small farms merged into plantations. This tendency of the land to become concentrated into fewer and fewer hands was speeded up after the agricultural slump following the World War. Contemporaneously with the post-war depression, planters began entering the state from Mississippi, bringing hundreds of Negro sharecroppers with them. There had been very few Negro sharecroppers in Arkansas previous to this time. Because the Negro sharecroppers have fewer economic and social liberties, the planters were able to force them to accept inferior living conditions. They were used as a club to beat down the standards of the white workers, who, in turn,

[25] Quoted by Ray Stannard Baker: The New Industrial Unrest, pp. 40-41.

[26] Ibid, p. 42.

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had to meet this new competition or get out. Thus the plantation system came into existence.

Plantations run from several hundred acres to many thousands. One landlord in Wilson, Arkansas, farms approximately 70,000 acres, in addition to owning most of the town. Each plantation is divided into parcels of twenty or thirty acres. On each parcel of land stands the sharecropper's miserable home, a shack of unpainted boards, which is often twisted and leaning from years of weather and wear. Few new shacks are in evidence, but often small sheds previously used to store cotton have since been converted into living quarters for average-size families.

Because of the scarcity of money, it is customary under the plantation system for the landlord to "furnish" his help; that is, supply it with credit for the purchase of necessary foodstuffs at the plantation commissary or with a merchant previously arranged for by the landlord. This credit is issued in the form of "dodolum" books, or commissary checkbooks, the individual checks being used as a medium of exchange. At such plantation commissaries the buyer is compelled to pay prices sometimes 50 percent higher than those in independent stores. In addition to this mark-up, a flat 10-percent interest is charged upon all "furnishings" when the annual settlement is made. Sometimes an interest of 25 cents on the dollar is charged. At the end of the year, the income from the cotton crop is supposedly divided on a fifty-fifty basis between the sharecropper and the landlord. With his half, the sharecropper hopes to settle his account with the commissary. These accounts are often kept with a "crooked pencil," in local parlance, especially those of the illiterates, who number hundreds. When all accounts are figured, the sharecropper more often than not is indebted to his landlord.

The economic status of the sharecropper is between that of the small managing share-tenant and that of the day laborer. While the latter must also work for the plantation owners, he is not held in such abject servitude as the less fortunate sharecropper. It is next to impossible to imagine living conditions lower than those of the cropper, but such is true in the case of the day laborer. He is rarely paid cash, but must take his pay in credit at the mark-up commissary store. He is paid 50 to 75 cents a day in Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas for laboring from sun-up to sun-down; in Missouri, the usual rate is $1 a day. This sum, received intermittently, must provide a living for the family.

To add to the burden of the cotton workers, public relief is hard to get in spite of prevailing poverty and hunger. It is necessary for each prospective client to travel, mostly by foot and in a weakened condition, the distance to the county seat, which may be twenty or thirty miles away, to make application. Then, during the next three weeks, his case may be investigated. He is usually told by the visitor that his "keep" is the responsibility of the planter. The planter unconcernedly refuses to shoulder it and there the matter ends for everyone except the family, whose need goes right on.

For the purpose of remedying their miserable living conditions, the sharecroppers, day laborers and small farmers decided to bind themselves together in a labor union. The initiative for organizing the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union was given last summer by Norman Thomas when he visited and spoke at Tyronza, Arkansas. The union was formally established under Socialist leadership, with H. L. Mitchell, state secretary of the Socialist Party, at its head, and received its state charter July 29, 1934. While it began and is now growing chiefly under Socialist leadership, the union as such is non-political.

Last summer when the union was first launched, the planters were not greatly concerned. Their lack of concern at that time is understandable when you consider that in the past they have dominated their tenants so completely that any thought of aggressiveness on their part was inconceivable. This early indifference of the planters was not long-lived. Their growing concern is indicated by the present reign of intimidation and terrorism that makes up the history of the sharecropper-planter controversy. In August, a Negro organizer was arrested and beaten and a white man forced to leave the county; on November 14, four organizers were arrested; on January 15, Ward Rodgers was arrested and convicted on the charge of anarchy. More recently, Bob Reed and I were dragged from a peaceful union meeting, beaten with pistol butts, barely saved from the lynch rope, and jailed; all of which was done by planters' hired thugs and a sprinkling of law officials. Still more recently, several speakers, scheduled to make a meeting in Birdsong, Arkansas, were met by a mob and roughly ejected. At present, a general reign of terror and state of high tension exist in eastern Arkansas.

The planters are not carrying on this campaign individually. Early in the history of the union they met in Tyronza to plan its destruction. Up to date, at least nine methods have been used in carrying out their program, which is:

1. To influence the sharecropper and the day laborer against the union by telling them the union is unnecessary, that the planters would "furnish" them, that the union is only a ruse, led by outsiders, to take their money.
2. To force local leaders of the union out of the vicinity by the boycott. (The boycott is especially effective here where the planters designate where the farmer buys. H. L. Mitchell was forced by the boycott to move his cleaning plant to Memphis, as was Clay East with his filling station.)
4. To intimidate by terror and arrest.
5. To introduce the Red scare.
6. To foster yellow-dog contracts, in which the tenant promises not to join the union and not to shelter anyone the planter may object to.
7. To discriminate against leaders and members of the union on the relief question. (Local relief authorities deny this, but there is proof that the practice exists.)

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8. To evict members of the union. (Open practice.)
9. To forbid street meetings without permit from the mayor. (Several ordinances have been passed to this effect since the launching of the union. That the mayor is unlikely to grant permission for meetings has been my experience.)

The people realize they are greatly oppressed and the union to them means salvation. For them the union is not merely an industrial organization; it is a religious organization as well. Each community council has its chaplain. Meetings are opened with prayer and closed with prayer. Many ministers who preach among the sharecroppers are leaders in the union. When asked how the union fits in with religion, they will say there is no conflict, or, as one cropper expressed it, "The union is inspired by the Lord and will speed up the day when the rope spun by God will be used to hang the planters." Union songs are sung with religious fervor and are interspersed with religious stanzas.

The plantation owners have not succeeded in inculcating hatred between the whites and the Negroes, inasmuch as both races are willing, even eager, to unite their strength in the union. The feeling of the whites for the Negroes is a strange mixture of a sense of superiority and at the same time a realization that without the strength of the Negroes they cannot hope to progress far, since the latter constitute the majority of the eastern Arkansas tenants. The downward trend of living conditions among the tenants has greatly influenced the racial feeling. The Negro is used to drive still lower the living standard of the whites. Therefore, the whites realize that the only way Negro competition will cease is by raising their living conditions, thus placing the two races on an economic level; and in order to do this, the whites recognize that they must unite with the Negro in their demands. They do not hate the Negro, though it is true they resent his competition. Their feeling of superiority over the Negro is part tradition, part ignorance. Though the Negro has little personal security, though he is beaten and bullied, though the riding boss shoots into his shack in order to intimidate him, he attends union meetings and displays unbelievable courage.

The further development of the eastern Arkansas situation is apt to end in open violence and loss of life. Which side in the controversy will be triumphant is still an open question. Workers' organizations and liberals throughout the country have come to the aid of the sharecroppers' union with financial and moral support. On the other hand, the planters find great comfort in the local courts, which are dominated by them. Their latest move is to request active assistance from the state legislature of Arkansas. Undoubtedly, the eastern Arkansas situation is one of the most intense in the country, and at the same time one of social significance. If the planters win in the end, they will win because fascism at last prevails in eastern Arkansas.

LUCIEN KOCH.

Washington Notes

The General, the Publisher, the Priest—Wise Progressives—Muddling Through—Another $200,000,000 Fishing Trip?

IT IS doubtful if any good purpose was served by the great oratorical battle among General Johnson, Father Coughlin and Senator Huey Long. However, now that the air is clear of epithets, one curious point might be noted —the fact that men so far apart in their associations, records, beliefs and general political philosophy as Father Coughlin, General Johnson and William Randolph Hearst should support Mr. Roosevelt with equal fervor. Each of these three men disagrees with his policies, yet they all support him. It would be easy to name a good many others not quite so prominent as the general, the priest and the publisher who are just as far apart politically but support the President with equal enthusiasm. It is a difficult thing to explain except on the ground that while Mr. Roosevelt has little political philosophy of his own, he does have a great gift for convincing all types of men that he is at heart sympathetic to their views. With a man as persuasive and charming as President Roosevelt, it takes a considerable length of time to understand his true character.

Mr. Roosevelt's tendency toward compromise, toward trying to reconcile the irreconcilable, is of course only part of the story. No matter what his character, the forces that really own and rule this country would have stopped him before he had gone very far toward the goal of "redistribution of wealth." Yet there is no doubt that the personal characteristics he has displayed are now at last proving something of a handicap. They have partly accounted for the defection of the progressive Republicans; and they have explained some of his recent troubles with Congressmen of every political complexion.

Whereas three months ago there was hardly a politician or observer to be found anywhere who was not ready to concede the inevitability of Roosevelt's reëlection in 1936, a great many now cherish doubts. The change has come about partially because of the instability of Mr. Roosevelt's direction and the confusion of his thought, and partially because of the strenuous efforts of his political strategists and advisers to maneuver him into the position of the conservative candidate. After two years of going one way, this attempt to reverse his steps is too clearly a political move to be effective. It impairs the faith of one element without gaining the confidence of the other. Another reason for the change may also be the ineptitude displayed by the administration leaders and the lack of coherent thought back of the legislative program. In other words, a hesitant leadership, not sure of itself, has encouraged opposition and, to some extent, made its own obstacles.

There is no better illustration of this than the present condition of the N.R.A. legislation. The prevailing belief at this writing is that Senator Borah's suggestion of letting the N.R.A., as a whole, expire, retaining the child-labor, minimum-wage, maximum-hour and collective-bargaining provisions in separate acts, contains more practical sense

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than any other so far made. Certainly the administration seems in a hopelessly confused frame of mind as to what it wants to do, and the statement of Mr. Donald Richberg before the Senate Finance Committee merely added to the confusion. His effort to show that Senator Borah favored monopoly made him ridiculous and rather deepened the impression that a state of mental demoralization exists among the presidential advisers in this N.R.A. business. Such an accusation against the man who has always assailed the N.R.A. on the ground that, through suspension of the anti-trust laws, it gives a huge advantage to Big Business at the expense of the little fellow, indicates a degree of muddle-headedness that would be hard to exaggerate.

As things are today, not one of Roosevelt's recommendations has gone through Congress in the shape he wanted it, and already several pieces of legislation he did not want have been passed—and signed. The recent British financial policy announced by Mr. Chamberlain has imposed upon the administration the necessity of evolving a counter protective policy, made the more difficult because of the lack of experts in the Treasury Department. The proponents of the bonus are confident that a compromise measure will be passed and that, rather than have it passed over his veto, Mr. Roosevelt will approve it. He has no taxation program. Yet Congress, through various additional appropriations, already has thrown out of whack the so-called normal "balanced" budget upon which the President sets such high store.

It would seem that, with such a situation on his hands, the President might find it a little difficult to take a spring vacation. I can perfectly understand his earnest desire to get away from it all, but it is difficult to see how he can manage it. However, he is going to manage it—in fact, it has already been arranged. Before the end of the month, the President expects to board the Astor yacht and hie him away to the Southern seas, there to fish, bask in the sun and enjoy the complete mental relaxation provided by his choice of companions. It may be, of course. that the situation in Congress will prevent it, but he does not seem to think so.

Last year the President went gayly off on his cruise just before the vote by which his veto of the Independent Offices bill was overridden by a majority of three. It was pretty generally conceded that had he stayed in Washington then, he could easily have won over at least the two votes necessary to sustain his veto. Mathematically minded persons at the time estimated that the Astor yachting trip had increased government expenditures by about $200,000,000. Whether it was a wise increase is of course a different story.

At any rate, preparations to be off again are under way. Some take this to mean that the President does not intend to veto the bonus bill at all. They think he hopes to get it into satisfactory enough form so that he can sign it without the financial chaos he feared and that was so direfully predicted by his Big Business friends. Possibly so. Anything can happen under present conditions. The chief trouble is that nobody seems to be able to see more than a few days ahead.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

An Amazing Advertisement—Taxes and Electric Rates—Tender-Hearted Utilities—Watch That Ball!

THE MOST amazing advertisement I have seen in a long time is the one of the Associated Gas and Electric System that appeared in last week's newspapers.

Here is the theme:

The nation's tax bill in 1934 was about $9,500,000,000.

The nation's residential electric bill was about $667,000,000—less than eight percent of the tax bill.

Which is more important to the citizens of the United States?

What will you say for the quality of thought that asks you to compare the cost of taxes and the cost of electricity and then makes a comparison between the mere electric bill of homes and all taxes of every sort, federal, state, city, taxes on residences and business, railroads, factories, everything?

Let's take a look at a genuine comparison. Here is an actual home in New York City. The city tax bill of the owner and occupant was $180. The electric-light bill was $131. Now which is the more important?

For his $180 in city taxes, the owner got fire protection—several engine companies maintained in the neighborhood. How much is this worth in money? What would his insurance be without that fire protection? He got police protection, a police precinct station maintained in the neighborhood, plus the general police protection of the city. He enjoyed the health protection of the city, which costs a huge sum. He got traffic regulation, building inspection. He got a system of magistrates' courts to enforce the law, a magnificent system of public parks, playgrounds for children, hospitals, clinics; he got his streets lighted at night, those same streets kept clean and in repair. He got garbage and waste removal and he got education for his children right up through high school. The last item alone he could not have received for the cost of his taxes if he tried to send his children to the cheapest private school.

And in addition to all this, his $180 helped to pay interest on the city debt—that vast debt which crooked politicians and "honest" business collaborated in loading on the city, including the great subway debts and the extortionate prices the city has had to pay for electricity.

What did he get for his $131 for electricity? Light for his house and, in this man's case, heat in his electric iron and an occasional use of his toaster. If you add the cost of gas and electricity, you will find that this man was paying more for gas and electricity than for all those absolutely essential and extensive services his city provided at such small cost.

The A. G. E. writer imagines that taxes are merely a charge—something the city extracts from the taxpayer without giving anything in return. That a city tax bill is really a bill for services rendered does not appear to have entered his mind. Instead of the services the city renders being charged as "taxes" in yearly bills, the citizen should be

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billed every month for them. He should get these bills regularly, as he gets his phone bill and his gas bill and electricity bill. I do not know how this would be in New York, but at least one city—Cincinnati—has broken down these charges. If the citizens of Cincinnati were to receive monthly bills for city services, here is about the way they would look (based on a $5,000 home):

Police Protection	$ .40
Fire protection	.40
Hospitals	.29
Garbage and waste collection	.15

These are just samples. But the entire bill of the man in this case, for all city, county and school-district purposes, including education, was $9 a month. What do you think that same gentleman's bill for electricity and gas would be a month?

But why didn't this ad writer and propagandist of the Associated Gas and Electric System make a comparison between all the taxes and *all* the electric-light charges? He didn't, but he nevertheless asks which is the more important. We will let him answer.

Which is the more important—the cost of the national government, army and navy, all the federal courts, federal police protection against gangsters, federal aids to agriculture, business and the billions included in that tax total for relief (which is keeping the nation afloat), all the costs of state governments, hospitals, universities, courts and the countless services rendered by the government, including roads, all the city services, including police, fire, education and health—

Or the lighting of our homes by electricity?

Which is the more important?

The truth is that the cheapest thing we pay for—in spite of the corruption of politics—is our government services. The most expensive thing we get, in spite of the "honesty and efficiency" of our great business men, is our electricity.

Another ad contains a picture of an old Conestoga wagon, pioneer travelers and a cloud of gentle-faced old people—the men and women of America who have saved their pennies for the future. Their savings have now become something very sacred to the utility men and the promoters who ran them in the twenties. Why not a picture of those same old men and women whose savings were washed away in the frenzied promotions of the utility holding-company adventurers in these last fifteen years? The truth is that the utilities have taken away the people's money both on the securities sold them and on the rates charged for their services.

Now President Roosevelt, at a moment when he needs three cheers from the liberals he betrayed a few days after he came into office, has sent a message to Congress about the holding companies. The liberals rise and cheer. They are right. All liberals want is a speech, or a message. They have had their message. Now let me warn them to keep their eyes on the bill. The liberals cheered the Securities Exchange Bill, the Securities Act, the social-security message. But what did they get? Watch that holding-company bill!

JOHN T. FLYNN.

On the Labor Front

The Anti-Red Drive on Labor Grows—
Outlawing Left-Wing Parties—
The Purge in Steel

THE ARREST and threatened deportation of John Strachey, on charges of sedition, is interpreted by some as the beginning of an intensive anti-Red drive by the government. This view, I think, does not magnify the seriousness of Mr. Strachey's arrest, though it might be somewhat more accurate to say that his experience is merely the latest and most drastic incident in what appears to be a concerted campaign to deprive labor of the right of free speech and free organization. This campaign is not just beginning. It dates back at least as far as the general strike in San Francisco last summer. It has been marked by a sudden increase in criminal-syndicalism cases—mostly against labor organizers—after nearly a dozen years in which such cases were unknown. It is also reflected in the flood of bills aimed at proscribing radical activities that are now before Congress and various state legislatures. The announcement last week by Secretary of the Navy Claude Swanson that formal charges may soon be lodged against twenty-six alleged "Communists" reported working in the Washington Navy Yard also shows how the wind is blowing.

In recent months more than fifty persons have been arrested and prosecuted under state criminal-syndicalism and sedition laws. Almost without exception, these arrests were prompted by pressure from vigilante and employer organizations and involved workers who had been active in strikes and unemployment demonstrations. In California, seventeen workers—the majority of them officials and organizers of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union—are now on trial for criminal syndicalism. In Oregon, three persons were recently convicted of criminal syndicalism and given sentences totaling thirteen years; eight more are awaiting trial. In the truck drivers' strike in Fargo, North Dakota, sixty were recently indicted for the "crime" of "riot"; sixteen have already been convicted and given terms ranging from two to six months. Similarly, statutes covering anarchy and sedition have been revived in recent months to prosecute active labor leaders in Washington, Illinois, West Virginia and Arkansas.

Mr. Strachey is not alone in his quarrel with the immigration authorities. John Ujich, a resident of the United States since 1906, is in much the same boat. Mr. Ujich is under order of deportation to Italy because he was too vociferous in his demands before the County Welfare Board in Tacoma, Washington. He protested that one relief worker had to go to a station too far distant from his home for relief. As a result of this complaint the Board investigated Mr. Ujich and decided that he was guilty of believing in and advocating the violent overthrow of the government. Accordingly the Board hailed him before an immigration inspector and he was ordered deported, though he flatly denied the beliefs with which he was charged.

The evidence against Ujich, it is worth noting, was of the flimsiest sort. He was not a member of any proscribed party. The witnesses against him were, with one excep-

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tion, either relief officials or relief workers dependent on the good will of the officials. Even so, none of them could remember the exact words Ujich used in advocating violence, while the government's chief witness was so confused that he regarded the Red Army and the United Front, to which Ujich belonged, as one and the same thing. The Ujich case is now being appealed to the Supreme Court. If the Court sustains Ujich's deportation it will be the first case where an alien is deported for believing in or advocating violence in the absence of any proof of his being a member of a proscribed organization.

In the meantime, the anti-Red drive is proceeding along another front in the state legislatures. In recent weeks, four states—Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana and Tennessee—have enacted measures that deprive left-wing parties of the right to appear on the ballot. Similar bills are now pending in the legislatures of fourteen other states. These measures, backed by such organizations as the American Legion, the Elks and Chambers of Commerce, are ostensibly designed to outlaw political parties that advocate "the overthrow of the government by force and violence or that preach" sedition or treason. But according to the American Civil Liberties Union, which has made a close study of the bills, the wording is so "vague and general that dominant political machines could suppress all minorities, Communists, Socialists—even a Farmer Labor party would be threatened."

One of the more discouraging exhibitions of reactionary and unimaginative union leadership is represented in the recent action of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers in revoking the charters of eighteen locals. These locals participated in a so-called rank-and-file convention held in Pittsburgh early in February and attended by 78 of the 122 lodges in the Amalgamated. Prior to this convention, President Michael Tighe had threatened all locals taking part with such disciplinary action and, apparently, the chief reason why this threat was not carried out more fully is that the officials of the A.A. did not know for certain which lodges had participated. It is quite obviously the intention of Mr. Tighe to suppress all criticism of his leadership, even though this may mean "purging" the A.A. of most of its members.

The significance of this purge is twofold. It makes very evident Mr. Tighe's decision to block a bold and intensive organization drive among steel workers—chiefly, no doubt, because of his fear that he may be voted out of office. And it reveals the inability of the A.F. of L. to embark on a thoroughgoing program of industrial unionization. In steel, as in automobiles, the craft unions are still insisting that their interests must not be jeopardized—and they have a large majority of the A.F. of L. executive council on their side. It seems quite safe to predict that the steel workers will not be organized so long as Mr. Tighe dominates the A.A. But the A.A., according to reliable information, probably has no more than 7,000 fully paid-up members at present, though it has enrolled perhaps 150,000 members during the past year and a half. Thus the chief hope for a strong union in steel rests among the rank-and-file locals and others who, technically, are not members of the A.A., either because of the purge or because of nonpayment of dues.

WILLIAM P. MANGOLD.

Virgilian Ladies

I HAVE what they call sustained a slight injury to the knee and Virgil comes in from time to time to do the bandages and various applications. He accomplishes this with a skill that might well amaze one, and does indeed evoke a slight surprise from the doctor himself, or the nurse when she arrives in the bright morning, fresh as a rose. I have asked Virgil how it happens that he should possess this skill and this interest in massage and bandaging, this curious knowledge of how the dressing of a wound should proceed, and this accuracy in his results. He tells me that he has always liked such things and that he wants to get a chance in the Negro ward of the hospital. But most of it he got from his grandmother.

His grandmother, Virgil says, was a lady doctor. She learned from old peoples about these things, and nobody knew how she knew some of the things she knowed. She just liked treatin' people when they were sick. They used to be sen'in' from all around.

I ask some questions about his grandmother, and Virgil begins to tell me about her.

When he was a little boy he loved to follow her whenever she went to visit a case. He used to sit and watch her work. Of course she went into the woods and found herbs and made teas and medicines that would heal; but the most thing she done was heat, puttin' heat here and there or, bettern that, rubbing people. Some way or other she had learned these things, but he cannot tell how, just 'way back yonder some time. They would send for her, and she would go and set there all day by the bed, jes' watchin'. He has seen her rubbing people for pneumonia, or some disease; and she would say, "About six o'clock this here pain will stop"; and he'd set there watching her and she watching the patient and rubbing the spot; and, sure enough, about six o'clock or sundown the pain was all gone.

Whenever anybody sent for his grandmother to come, she always went. Beside the herbs and the ointments out of grease she made, she knew how to brew things for them. For a choked-up throat or some sort of pneumonia, she would make hog-hoof tea and give it to them. And she had medicines she could give for everything. But a lot of it was that rubbin', hours rubbing and working the spot, and a lot of it was watching sick peoples all day how they was, and she hadn't a mind against it if it was all night long till daylight.

Sometimes, Virgil says, he thinks how times has changed; at least how the womens goes on now. He was almost married once, and his girl began to tell him how she was always going to be ready for him when he come home in the evening. She was going to be dressed up, puttin' rooage on her cheeks, and be ready to see him. But he says he had no use for that kind of thing, he wanted a woman as went out to work like he did and helped make a living. His girl says she was goin' to show him, you'll see; and he says you ain't going to show me nothin', and that was the end of that; because he remembered a friend who married a woman; and, oh, she can't do nothing, she wants a car so they got a car, and of course he couldn't ride with her all the time when he went to work in the brick-yard, and so he come to find out that she was taking riding a

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lot of buck niggers with nothing to do; and so then the man come to collect the payments and debts; and they had to give up the house, and she say she ain't going to be restin' there with nothing, and so she left him, and now everybody says he's jes' shrunk up; he's like a pin, thinking of that woman; and she running round, and he like a little bittie dried prune.

"But," Virgil says, "I ain't going to have no woman standin' me up."

So that girl he was going to marry, all that was the matter with her, she jes' got him wrong. If she'd left her face as it was and put on a gingham dress with a nice string around her waist, she might have been a lady. Somethin' like that.

Virgil talks about his grandmother. She was an old lady, very tall, a brown color, and always wore a black cotton dress. It was short up in front and long trailing behind. Around her waist she had a piece of black string of the same cloth. She always had high-topped ladies' shoes. She wore on her head a kind of white thing. It was a white band and a sort of flat plume that stuck up in front stiff. He tries to describe this headdress to me, and it sounds very much like certain headdresses in the Egyptian paintings, and must have come down to her in some way or other from Africa. All Virgil can say is that it was white and starched stiff; he holds his curved hand up over his head, palm out. And what he knows about Africa is that hit's full of monkeys, and of course they ain' nothin' but jes' some peoples is gone backward. He sho wishes he had one.

His grandmother was an old lady that never said much nor smiled much and didn't like any old fool nigger. When she treated people, she took whatever money they wanted to give her for her services. She hid the money here and there about the house, in the chinks and under things. When she died they looked everywhere for this money and found some, not very much. Virgil remembers, when he was a little boy, how, even on Sundays when he had his pants tied nice at the knee and his legs greased for going to church, that if his grandmother got a call, he would slip off with her and set there all day if she was there all day, watching her rub and work. Once there was a woman birthing a child and he sure was crazy to sit there and see, so he was just sitting there on a bench, not saying a word; but his grandmother looked around, and said, "Get out of here, what you doin'?"

I ask how old was his grandmother when she died and Virgil says she was ninety-four. The most she ate was to drink coffee and eat clay and dip snuff. He and his brother used to dig the clay for her down by the creek lots of times, and she washed it out to have it pure.

The hog-hoof tea, I tell Virgil, makes sense enough, because the hoofs are full of an ammonia compound that loosens phlegm from congested membranes. I do not know enough about herbs and chemistry to speak of some of her other cures, though I fancy many of them were good remedies. I do know that for centuries the Hindus, and later some of our Western doctors, have used clay, or kaolin, to cleanse and empty the intestines.

His grandmother, Virgil says, knew lots of those things and she never said where she learned them. She never talked much at no time.

She was a fine old lady, he says, and there sure were a line of people at her burying when she died and that's just it: if these here girls wanting to marry was more like his grandmother, there'd be something in it.

Anyhow, Virgil is going to build himself a house. He has a friend who built a house for $250. The lumber company lends you the money and you pay back in instalments. He could get a Mexican to build him a chimney and then help him build the four rooms around it. Out in the shed at his sister's house, Virgil has a trunk and it's locked, don't nobody know what's in it. But he's got things there he has been saving, such as folks have given him, and he wants his house all nice. He's got a gas heater a lady had and said, "Virgil, don't you want this?" Of course he haven't got gas on the lot, but the heater is in the trunk with the other things. He's already got the lot, because his father said he'd deed him a lot from one corner of the place his father had bought; and this is because Virgil had helped him with the payments, and you can sure have it, his father said.

Then, when the house is built, Virgil will get him some furniture, and so he will have a nice house that belongs to him. He wouldn't have to live there all the time, of course, but he would know he had it. He says:

"What I wants is to git me a nice little house, and then leave it."

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Universities in America

SIR: Mr. Laski in his excellent essay on universities ["Universities in These Days," The New Republic, January 23] does not mention certain aspects of the problem of intellectual freedom that are immediately pertinent to the colleges and universities of this country. Among these is the awkward position of the endowed institution. These colleges and universities survive and grow largely through the skittish beneficence of the very rich. Their endowments are simply great fortunes. And their income is the milk from the same fat cow that nourishes the other great concentrations of wealth.

Financially, then, the endowed colleges and universities lie down with the very rich—and all the very rich stand for in today's economics. For these institutions, the more and richer the better, the swifter the flow of income to the broad pools of wealth the better, the more congested the concentration of wealth the better. And surely they realize it. . . . Often now the pressure toward social and economic orthodoxy is little more than intellectual inertia. And many of those who do assert non-conformity have not yet made themselves dangerous to the practical interests of their institution. But such extenuations carry danger because they nurse complacency and harbor the seeds of mental flaccidity.

Another important pressure, this time peculiar to tax-supported colleges and universities, is the menace of political control. Appropriations in most cases come from the state legislatures. These assemblies are highly sensitive to social and economic unorthodoxy. Many of them flaunt their lack of respect for academic freedom, especially in the imbroglio of political struggle. The welfare of state-aided and supported institutions hangs upon the approval of these political assemblies. . . .

The danger of these clamps on the freedom of American colleges and universities is more clear under the efficient American practice of combining the head of the academic faculty and the business manager of the institutions in one person—the president. Through the president the pressure arising from the expediencies of getting money flows, often without interruption, into the foun-

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tainhead of educational and academic policy. The executive, perhaps with the stoutest regard for academic freedom, must conciliate the two functions of his office—and it is easier to shut up the faculty and students than to get money. . . .

These comments are not intended to prove Mr. Laski's solution either good or bad, but only to suggest briefly some American aspects of the problem.

Harrisburg, Pa. RALPH HETZEL, JR.

A Confusion of Names

SIR: Owing to the odd and unfortunate coincidence of names, many persons have attributed to me the authorship of "The Scented Garden: Anthropology of the Art of Love of the Levant," by Dr. Bernhard Stern, correctly attacked as a sex racket by Otis Ferguson in The New Republic of March 20. What the reviewer does not point out, because the publisher avoids mention of it in his egregious circular, is that the book is a translation of the work of a German physician first published over thirty years ago.

BERNHARD J. STERN.

Columbia University, New York City.

The Doctor in Spite of Himself

SIR: What is The New Republic nurturing in its bosom, a new school of Précieuses Ridicules, for gosh sakes? I suggest it publish this open letter to Mr. Paul Wren, author of a review printed in the issue of February 27:

> Dear Wren: I read your review of "Call It Sleep," and all I got to say is . . . well, never mind. You're healthy, aintcha? Forget them stern casual and powerful arboreal declarations and densities. Whassa matter widya? Why wreck my mental digestion wid your nervous dispatches, crapulous tenements, and even moneys? Whaddya mean by this here diffuse poetry to the social light of that there angry sunset? Cantcha be human?

New York City. M. O. RAVAN.

Lest We Forget

SIR: While the United States Senate was considering the World Court protocols, I wrote to Senator Donahey, urging him to support the pending resolution for their adoption and for the adherence of the United States to that Court.

I am sending you herewith his reply. It is amazing to me that anyone occupying the exalted position of a United States Senator should be capable of supposing that this letter can in any way excuse his opposition to that Court. Real arguments have been advanced by others and are worthy of fair consideration, but this letter seems so much like mere piffle that it cannot be dignified by designating it as an argument.

Toledo, Ohio. SILAS E. HURIN.

[ENCLOSURE]

LEST WE FORGET

If Great Britain made the payment due us on the war debt, it would cost her 4.1 percent of her budget. She says she can't pay us but she is spending 13 percent of her budget on armaments.

If France paid, it would cost her 2 percent of her budget. She says she can't pay us, but she is spending 27.4 percent of her budget on armaments. After the Armistice was signed we loaned France more than a billion dollars and during the same period of time she loaned other European countries $700,000,000.

If Italy paid us, it would cost her 1.4 percent of her budget. She says she can't pay, but she is spending 33.1 percent on armaments.

We spent $42,000,000,000 on their war. We loaned them $12,000,000,000 more. We conscripted 4,000,000 men for their war. We shipped 2,000,000 across the sea. We shipped almost all in British bottoms, and paid Great Britain $140 to $180 for the transportation of every boy. We paid them to transport our boys to their war.

A hundred and twenty-five thousand of those boys never came back.

We are paying $800,000,000 a year interest on these debts that we contracted for them and that they now refuse to pay.

If you subscribe to the greatest fraud of all time and condemn me for voting "NO" on World Court adherence, sign this statement and return it to me.

VIC DONAHEY.

Political Prisoners in Haiti

SIR: Your readers will be interested to know that a committee has been formed to work for the release of the young Haitian writer, Jacques Roumain, and the seven other intellectuals who have been imprisoned in Haiti since October of last year.

Despite the fact that Roumain comes from one of the wealthiest families in Haiti—his grandfather was President of the republic—he has devoted himself to the liberation of the oppressed and illiterate masses of his country. In 1931 he held the post of Secretary of Education, which he subsequently lost as the result of defending strikers in Port-au-Prince. Efforts of the President of Haiti, Mr. Stenio Vincent, to dispose of a popular opponent were successful in the summer of 1934. Roumain had formed a committee to procure financial aid for the Scottsboro boys and had ordered literature from New York. A letter in French announcing the shipment of the literature from New York was confiscated and one word, *matériaux*, was conveniently interpreted as meaning bombs and ammunition. A search of Roumain's house brought to light only books and newspapers but he was nevertheless arrested, court-martialed, found guilty of treason on the grounds of importing arms and sentenced to three years in prison. Against seven other former government officials who opposed the President's terroristic tactics other pretexts for imprisonment were found and they were also jailed. Such is the treatment of those in Haiti who dare to stand for justice and dignity.

We feel that the injustice meted out to these men should be the concern of everyone who believes in the principle of freedom. We ask, therefore, that all readers of The New Republic send in letters of protest to the Committee for the Release of Jacques Roumain, 210 Fifth Avenue, Room 502, New York City.

MRS. FRANCINE BRADLEY, Secretary.

New York City.

Extracts from Letters

THE Office Workers' Union, 504 Sixth Avenue, New York City, writes: "The twelve-week strike of the Ohrbach workers, led by the Office Workers' Union, ended today [March 8] in a victory for the strikers. Included in the agreement with Mr. Nathan M. Ohrbach and ratified by a unanimous vote of the strikers, was the return of all workers by March 18; seventeen, selected by the union, went back March 9. All are to have full seniority rights; there is to be a preferential list for extras and no discrimination against union members. . . . White-collar workers in this strike have shown their ability to organize and fight for better working conditions. In face of police brutality, with twenty workers badly beaten, in face of an injunction forbidding more than two pickets, these workers won a signal victory."

The Drama League Travel Bureau writes that it has at its disposal scholarships covering full tuition for the six-week summer session at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. These scholarships are primarily intended for students interested in literary and drama study, but are also given for the more important purpose of promoting international understanding. Application blanks may be obtained by addressing the Drama League Travel Bureau, Essex House, New York City.

Gene L. Breen, 1114 Majestic Building, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is gathering material for a life of the late Victor L. Berger, Socialist publisher and Congressman. He is anxious to communicate with all persons who have any correspondence or other material relative to his subject.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Men and Ghosts

LAST WEEK a drama in verse by Archibald MacLeish was published in Boston and performed three times in a New York theatre. I read the book, I saw the play on its last evening, and I came away with mixed but chiefly favorable impressions. Say this for "Panic,"[1] that it brings a new intelligence to the theatre and embodies the results of the experiments made by modern poets. Say this for the author, that he has achieved a style, has written verse that is quick, flashing with images and fit to be spoken on the stage. Say this, too, that he has chosen a major subject and has written about his own time instead of describing court life in Provence or the tribulations of George Washington or any other of the subjects that have been romanticized, glamorized and thoroughly predigested for the audience. There is nothing easy or cheap about his work; even its faults are painstakingly honest.

"Panic" is a play about the banking crisis of February, 1933. Its protagonist is McGafferty, described as "a sort of composite, non-historical, Ford-Morgan-Carnegie industrialist and banker, the most powerful figure of his time." He is trying to form a money pool in order to prevent the ruin of the banking system. A little mob of radicals bursts into the board-room and confronts the little mob of bankers. Among the intruders is a blind man, who puts his hand on McGafferty's face and tells him that the old order is ended, that "The will is made in your own mind to die." McGafferty from that moment feels subconsciously that the blind man is right. Though he struggles at first honestly and later by fraud to save his great bank, everything fails him, everyone betrays him—and most of all he fails and betrays himself. Meanwhile another drama is being enacted by the shapeless and nameless crowd that follows the news on the electric bulletin outside McGafferty's office. The crowd begins by putting its faith in the great banker, then hopes for an unknown savior, and then, after it learns that McGafferty is dead by his own hand, suddenly feels a sense of release and abandons itself joyfully to the deep tidal flood of events. The play ends with many voices crying:

> March!
> Shout!
> Run with the
> Marching men: with the thunder of
> Thousand heels on the earth . . .
>
> Man's fate is a drum!

I was surprised to find that, in spite of its mysticism and abstraction and unrelieved tensity of emotion, "Panic" was effective on the stage. "Effective for whom?" you might ask after reading the generally hostile reports of the dramatic critics. Well, it was certainly effective for those who saw the play on its last evening—that is, for a strange audience composed partly of society people, partly of second-string critics, but chiefly of radicals, readers of The New Theatre and The New Masses, the two magazines for whose benefit the performance was given. I have to report that even this audience found some passages tedious or unmotivated; one could hear coughs and rustling papers. In his last scene, however, McGafferty was as wintry and tragic as King Lear; and a moment later the triumphant mood of the chorus swept over us, even though we could not always understand what was being said. There was a long ovation after the curtain fell, interspersed with half a dozen boos and fifty shouts of "Author!"—agreement, sharp dissent, enthusiasm; in short, the definite reaction for which any writer hopes.

Yet everybody who read or attended the play—the book reviewers, the invited audience of the first performance, the rich audience of the second (when orchestra seats cost $5.50), the left-wing-intellectual audience of the third, the dramatic critics—everybody felt in his own fashion that there was something wrong with it, some fault on which he could perhaps put his finger. And, having shared this feeling, I should like to give my own diagnosis, which perhaps differs more in words than in content from some of those already presented.

MacLeish has obviously come down from his ivory tower; this fact was mentioned several times in the symposium that followed the performance. He has decided to write about the life of his own time, about events in which all of us participated. Yet he still chooses the one theme that has been most popular among ivory-tower poets. Essentially he is writing about the Artist and the World, about the conflict between a sharply realized individual and a vaguely depicted and terrifying collectivity. There is only one real character in "Panic," and the only conflict is the conflict within the mind of the hero-villain. Everything else is nebulous. The street crowd, representing "the external world against which the action of the play takes place," is composed of shapes in darkness, speaking as A Man, A Woman, An Old Woman, A Girl. The bankers who betray McGafferty are likewise wooden and symbolic figures, "rigid in the short black jackets and piped trousers (London model). They move and gesture together, but not with mechanical precision." The radicals who come to badger him are "all young, all bareheaded, all in leather jackets; one of them blind with a white ecstatic face. Like the bankers they move and gesture roughly together: speak one after the other in rotation." Even Ione, who appears in several scenes, is not really a person: she is simply the Woman, the Eternal Mistress, the depersonalized object of McGafferty's lust. "Panic" might be called a passion play of capitalism, but it is a passion play without Judas, without Pontius Pilate, without Mary Magdalene.

This failure to visualize or humanize the people who surround McGafferty is, I think, the real weakness of the drama. MacLeish is coming down from his tower; he is close enough to earth to perceive that men's fates are not independent of their times, that even the most powerful financial leaders cannot guard themselves against a general catastrophe. He sees that their destruction as a class would bring a vast sense of release to the people over whom they have ruled. But he still is not close enough to see that their struggles are human struggles, not against symbolic figures or forces looming invisibly "like the wind in curtains," but against living people. It is true, as MacLeish says, that in times of panic a formless apprehension goes creeping through the streets like fog or flood; yet this mysterious fluid finds living vessels for itself, and each of these vessels is different, and each is a man. The dramatist has the

[1] Panic: A Play in Verse, by Archibald MacLeish. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company. 112 pages. $2.

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task of seeing and presenting them in their infinite variety.

All this may seem like a principle high in the air, vague and difficult, yet it has specific applications. If MacLeish had followed it, he would have written a longer and better play. His bankers would not have been identical figures in short black London jackets; they would have had personalities; perhaps one of them would have been a Falstaff (or a W. C. Fields) and one a Uriah Heep. His radicals, too, would have been a chorus speaking in harmony and counterpoint rather than dryly "in rotation." Ione would have been a woman, not a mere foil. And the voices in the street would have differed one from another; some would have lagged behind the emotions of the crowd as a whole, some would have leaped ahead, so that the transition from mood to mood would have been less abrupt and more intelligible. The whole play would have been richer in character and texture without losing its effect of inevitable disaster; it would have been based on human conflicts. Even a poetic drama has to be drama first of all.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

Nippon Über Alles

Militarism and Fascism in Japan, by O. Tanin and E. Yohan. New York: International Publishers. 320 pages. $2.50.

Japan in Crisis, by Harry Emerson Wildes. New York: The Macmillan Company. 300 pages. $2.

Challenge: Behind the Face of Japan, by Upton Close. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 409 pages. $3.

IT IS a sound instinct that leads most people today to lump Japan and Nazi Germany together as two of a kind. In both countries the interrelated processes of militarism, fascism and imperialism have given rise to the same disturbing results; and a close analysis of this basic similarity will give a better understanding of the course of events in Japan than any excursion among the numerous superficial differences. As Karl Radek points out in the introduction to the first volume listed above, the ruling classes of both countries were confronted with the collapse of their economic order and pressed by the threat of social revolution. Looked at broadly, the steps taken to meet this situation were the same—a more open political dictatorship, the drastic suppression of revolutionary elements, and a nationalist crusade for territorial aggrandizement. Mr. Wildes observes various parts of this general process in Japan, but he sets them down disconnectedly, without being clearly aware of their proper relevance or real meaning. Upton Close is so bent on conjuring up a fantastic Japanese bogeyman, with the apparent object of scaring the Western Powers into preparedness, that he quite loses touch with the clash of forces within Japan that provides the motive power for its imperialistic drive. Tanin and Yohan, on the other hand, center their efforts on laying bare the roots of the fascist development in Japan. The chief difficulty of the two Soviet scholars, not wholly overcome, seems to have been in subordinating an overabundance of factual data to the general outlines of their story. Even so, the work has no counterpart in its searching analysis of the class forces motivating Japanese politics.

The dominating position acquired by finance capital in Japan's national economy, despite the importance of agriculture and the backwardness of industry, is shown to have produced the same results as in advanced industrial countries of the West. Japan's rural masses have been even more completely impoverished, while the industrial workers are equally the victims of wage-cutting and the stretch-out. Of more immediate political significance is the fact that monopoly capitalism has torn away the economic supports of Japan's lower-middle classes—the small landowners, industrialists, merchants and the intelligentsia. The rapid impoverishment of these has made fascism both possible and necessary, as a backfire against revolution.

The extremist army leaders, typified by General Sadao Araki, have developed a broad-scale nationalist, anti-capitalist and anti-communist demagogy surpassed only by Hitler's National Socialist propaganda. Although not supported by a unified fascist party, they have skillfully utilized the Japanese army reservists and the heterogeneous mass of reactionary societies, which together contain an active membership estimated at 750,000. Behind the scenes of this "national socialist" demagogy, Tanin and Yohan show General Araki and his associates forming their connections with the biggest Japanese capitalists, including the heads of the Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Okura, Sumitomo and other concerns. The pretensions of the militarists to a sincere interest in the welfare of the Japanese peasants are also effectively riddled.

Up to the present, the Japanese bourgeoisie has been unwilling to grant a monopoly of governmental power to the army leaders. In the Saito and Okada Cabinets, however, the army (War Ministers Araki and Hayashi) and the capitalists (Finance Minister Takahashi) have together hammered out an essentially fascist program. Military expansion, the war budgets, merciless suppression of revolutionary elements, government sponsorship of industrial concentration and the war preparations in Manchuria are examples of the general trend. The next serious crisis, at home or abroad, will see the Japanese bourgeoisie turning even more definitely to the military for the "strong government" that they will require.

Approximately half the chapters of "Japan in Crisis" deal with the same subjects covered by Tanin and Yohan, but the treatment lacks the thorough integration and careful analysis that give meaning to "Militarism and Fascism in Japan." Agrarian and labor issues, political developments and imperialist expansion are handled separately, in the form of case studies. If Mr. Wildes had realized more clearly the extent to which the crisis affecting monopoly capitalism in Japan had supplied the underlying pressures toward internal dictatorship and foreign aggression, he could have made his material into a much more illuminating study. As it stands, the book contains much valuable information, especially in the less well known fields of anti-foreignism, press censorship, law enforcement, vice suppression and the position of women. No one can read it without gaining an added sense of the inner evils that are gnawing at the heart of imperial Japan.

Upton Close, on the other hand, would have us believe that Japan is an invincible antagonist, destined to overwhelm the West both militarily and industrially. His much overdrawn picture neglects, in the first place, the basic instability afflicting any capitalist society that condemns the bulk of its population to economic insecurity and impoverishment. It further ignores the special weaknesses of Japan—the desperate plight of the rural masses, the insufficient concentration and technical backwardness of Japanese industry, and the excessive dependence of Japan's export trade on cotton and silk. "Challenge" offers exciting reading, especially in the narrative biographies of outstanding Japanese leaders, but it is no safe guide to the formulation of international policy.

T. A. BISSON.

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The Shadow of Defeat

Act of Darkness, by John Peale Bishop. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP'S first book, "Many Thousands Gone," was a collection of stories about the Civil War. The longest of them portrayed the sack of a town; the theme of another story was a man's relentless rage at the desecration of his mother's dead body. In his new book, a full-length novel, Mr. Bishop carries his exploration of the Southern mind and scene still farther. "Act of Darkness" is based on an actual trial still famous in the annals of the West Virginia county where he was born.

Mr. Bishop has chosen to view his characters through the mind of a growing boy. Such a device might well be limiting and artificial, but he makes it contribute both to the driving current of the story and to its symbolism. The boy, Marston, is the only son of a widowed mother; the other men of the family are the boy's grandfather and his uncle, Charlie. There is a sharp contrast between generations in the Marston family. The old lawyer, turning night into day in his whitewashed room, with his notes on the West Virginia debt pinned on a clothesline and fluttering above his head, is nevertheless poised in his world, sure of some realities. His son, Charlie, a successful farmer and horse breeder—as good a man, I take it, as Mr. Bishop thinks the Reconstruction South could produce—is shown as a person obsessed and hag-ridden by lust.

When Charlie is away from home at his pleasures, the thirty-seven-year-old spinster, Virginia Crannock, often comes to stay with his wife. Charlie and Virginia do not get on. The boy realizes this, as does Charlie's long suffering wife—it is perhaps a flaw in the story that Caroline is so colorless a person. One day after a little sparring at the table Charlie asks Virginia to go up into the meadow with him to look at some colts. Four days later he is interrupted in the midst of his wheat threshing by the sheriff, who has come to arrest him on a charge of rape.

The trial proceeds, with its "brilliant array of legal talent," its sordidness, its occasional spurts of brutal humor. Virginia, on the stand, tells her story calmly in the level monotone with which a survivor of a shipwreck might recount his adventures for the hundredth time. The lawyers drag out every detail that might be considered pertinent to the inquiry. The crowd, glutted, sinks back, hardly hoping for any more sensation. Then Charlie, brought to the stand, electrifies the courtroom and confounds his own lawyers by maintaining that it was Miss Crannock and not he who was the aggressor, that he "did only what a man has to do." This, "the act of darkness" providing the novelist with his theme, is seen through the fascinated and horrified eyes of the boy, John; and it is the boy who, brooding on these events, reconstructs them for us into the pattern of evil that dominates the book.

Mr. Bishop has performed a technical feat of considerable magnitude in his presentation of the courtroom scenes. His old-fashioned Virginia lawyers are living characters: Stewart Marshall who held his head like a gamecock, spurred with confidence; Lackland Boyd, the shrewd type, homely and confidential with the jury. Indeed, all the characters of the book are alive and authentically of their region. But "Act of Darkness" is more than a brilliant technical feat; it is a profound and moving piece of symbolism, a study of the desperation and spiritual chaos that can sometimes overtake a whole generation of men.

CAROLINE GORDON.

One Who Wrestled

Dostoevsky: A Life, by Avrahm Yarmolinsky. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 447 pages. $3.75.

THINK of some gnarled old magician who had been skillful enough to make a powerful demon take bodily form, whose spells and incantations could make this demon do his bidding, but who did not know how to dismiss the monster and lived in dread lest it attack him in his sleep. Foremost among such great demonologists of the nineteenth century is Fyodor Dostoevsky—and who can say whether he is boon or calamity for those who, during the chaos of adolescence, first come upon the turbulent order of his fiction and learn the dangerous trick of interpreting motives in his morbidly agitational vocabulary?

Mr. Yarmolinsky's painstaking biography of this unwieldy writer who "regarded his novels as his testament" had the effect of recalling with penetrating intensity the spell his works once exerted over me. The biographer's discreetly emotional pages, his thorough collation of relevant facts, and his many keen critical observations afforded the most persuasive incentive to live again the time of my "Dostoevskian conversion." The first work of his I had ever read was "Notes from Underground," an accidental choice making for the maximum of impressiveness, for in this early work one finds most succinctly the peculiar kind of psychological grotesque that was Dostoevsky's contribution. I wondered how it would look to me, after nearly twenty years. And rereading, I found:

> A man of the nineteenth century must and morally ought to be a preëminently limited creature. . . . Gentlemen, you must excuse me for being overphilosophical; it's the result of forty years underground. . . . Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. Though I did lay it down at the beginning that consciousness is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man prizes it and would not give it up for any satisfaction. . . . I have been for forty years listening to you through a crack under the floor. . . . Snow is falling today, yellow and dingy. . . . I made friends with no one. . . . I alternated between despising them and thinking them superior to myself. . . . I was always the first to drop my eyes. . . . Of the daughters, one was thirteen and another fourteen, they both had snub noses, and I was awfully shy of them because they were always whispering and giggling together. . . . In short, I parted from my schoolfellows as soon as I got out into the world. . . . That night I had the most hideous dreams. . . . No one paid any attention to me, and I sat crushed and humiliated. . . . If I suddenly asked him what he wanted, he would make no answer, but continue staring at me persistently. . . . Even in my underground dreams I did not imagine love except as a struggle. . . . Even now, so many years later, all this is somehow a very evil memory.

I found the work almost as engrossing as it had been when I first saw it, though I was happy to be able to feel that it was somewhat overdone, that it was not the "whole truth" that I once thought it to be, but simply a bogeyman's truth, an admonition. Dostoevsky's art is not a design for living—it is a "Beware the dog" kind of art. The appeal of the story technically, I think, resides in his great skill at building up vicious circles whereby a character's offenses became self-perpetuating, whereby in trying to extricate himself from one bad situation he creates another. This predicament is always engrossing: we enjoy it in a

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PERMANENCE and CHANGE

An Anatomy of Purpose by Kenneth Burke

KENNETH BURKE is not a professional philosopher. He is a writer of stories and criticism, who found that the perplexities of the day impelled him to move his questionings from one point to another. The result of this obstinacy might be called philosophy. Certainly it is the philosophic method, as applied to a world which is at the same time very much alive with new manifestations of truth and badly cluttered up with the dead truths that no longer apply. Being a seeker for words to express new meanings, he finds a name for this method and calls it "metabiology," since he is impelled to locate the basis of certainty in the organic structure of life itself.

The statement that "our thoughts and actions are determined by our interests" forms the background for much of the significant thinking of our current intellectual world. Are you interested in asking yourself what major issues lie behind that statement—what are its widest implications?

Burke, in the present volume, attempts to trace interrelationships among phenomena, many of which are superficially very different, such as motives, interpretation, expectancy, style, piety, hypocrisy, virtue, metaphor, guilt, nudism and war. He subjects to rigorous consideration our notion as to what action is, showing how it is affected by our vocabulary, so that a slight difference in words may lead to a radical difference in the choice of means.

He surveys the tie-up between humor, the grotesque, science, neurotic regression, psychoanalytical cure, and religious conversion; and contrasts and compares the functions of man's great rationalizations: magic, religion, science and poetry.

In dealing with words and our clumsy efforts at communication, he reviews some of the laboratory experiments which have been undertaken with them, showing how they can be weighted or neutralized, how they can be subjected to the cracking process of the verbal chemist, their meaning blasted apart like molecules and new synthetic substances made of the fragments.

The book, though it contains 352 closely printed pages, was condensed by the author, to one-half its original length. One way of thinking of it is as "psychological fiction," in which such writers such as Bentham, Marx, Darwin, Freud, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Veblen, Dewey and the many brands of modern artists are allowed to speak their parts. But the author, in organizing the appearances of his varied characters, contributes his own original and penetrating observations. He is the first of the younger writers to treat satisfactorily the tendency of modern science to take on a mystical cast, and to bring out the possible important parallels between contemporary issues and medievalism. And he pursues with great, though highly readable obstinacy, his central purpose which is to work out a *usable attitude* toward the present (with its natural accompaniments: a philosophy of the past and the future), and with a view to deciding what form one's "resignation" must take.

"Permanence and Change" is issued in The New Republic Dollar Series and is the first title to appear in the new Permatex cloth binding which renders jackets and wrappers unnecessary. It is an exciting and attractive book which everybody concerned with the orientation of his own thinking should possess. It may be had very simply, either by sending back the coupon below with $1.00 or by inquiring at any good bookstore.

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mildly provocative form when W. C. Fields gets caught in a barbed-wire fence—and here we have its morbid counterpart in the grimly hilarious antics of a wretch whose very yearnings for sociality aggravate his social affronts.

Fear of insanity, strong feeling of both guilt and promise, courting of punishment, humiliation, fascinated concern with crime and gambling, debt, overwork, ill nature, religiosity, sense of duality, foreboding of the "end of the world"; a superstitious belief in dreams (so thorough a cerebralist was bound to realize that dreams had "meaning," but his adumbrations of psychoanalysis would need the revision of other men); violent epileptic seizures which, before plunging him into misery, gave him a sense of complete beatitude and universal oneness; jingoism, reactionary attachment to the Tsar (he identified the Tsar with God and he identified the masses with God, and since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, he could thereby identify the Tsar with the masses); "and there were a thousand minor vexations." Decidedly, this demonologist was more apt at conjuring forth dark powers than at dismissing them—and Mr. Yarmolinsky gives us the whole drama with great care. Readers who would have the riddle of Dostoevsky definitely solved for them may be disappointed. But if one is interested in seeing all of the novelist's typical acts, emotions, situations and literary symbols assembled before him with scholarship and fluency, he will find in this volume a most stimulating store.

In his chapter of general evaluation, "Life After Death," the biographer says of his subject: "Involuntarily, indirectly, he furthered the cause of revolution. The moral maximalism informing his work is inimical to all reformist and middle-of-the-road policy." The suggestion seems reasonable. For all his attachment to the Little Father, whose government had sent him to Siberia, the antinomian and grotesque patterns of his thought provoked his readers to rebellion. If Mr. Yarmolinsky's estimate of Dostoevsky's effect upon his time is correct, critics must note that there may be a great difference between the face value of an author's exhortations and their social behavior when released into a given environmental texture.

KENNETH BURKE.

The Explorer Goes First

Hell-Hole of Creation: The Exploration of Abyssinian Danakil, by L. M. Nesbitt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 400 pages, illustrated. $3.75.

THREE previous exploring parties had been wiped out. Technically it was part of Abyssinia, but the government at Addis Ababa did not try to exercise authority over the wild tribes who knew no way of obtaining goods except by murdering the possessors. No consul would sanction the expedition, which had to steal its start. The objective was a great depression in the earth, the African continuation of the Dead Sea fault, with numerous valleys hundreds of feet below sea level and murderous heats in which temperatures of over 160° Fahrenheit were not uncommon. There were vast spaces shunned even by insects, leagues of lava stone edged like broken glass. The party, consisting of a British mining engineer and two Italians, not only made the crossing but made it the long way—and a new glory is added to the history of exploration.

The achievement is spectacular and the book is so ably and sensitively written that it belongs with the best in its field. Should one try to read between the lines? The Englishman is a mining engineer fresh from prospecting platiniferous areas in other parts of Abyssinia. He has a poor opinion of the Abyssinians, too thriftless to deserve their land. His two Italian companions—significant alliance—are adventurers who have as yet found no fortune, and Nesbitt makes it clear that only the hope of fortune has drawn white men to this hard land. When they reach Aussa sultanate, a large, comparatively cultivated region with a little wealth to be concerned over, everybody expresses fear of the Farangui (Franks), the old name for Europeans inherited from the Crusades. When they see Nesbitt taking notes they accuse him of spying out the country and Nesbitt tells it in smiling phrases.

Nevertheless, transports are bearing Fascist armies to Eritrea. And the expedition that stole out of Addis Ababa had its terminus in Eritrea. The history of twentieth-century exploration is full of coincidences like these.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Annals of the Poor

The Treatment of Poverty in Cambridgeshire: 1597-1834, by E. M. Hampson. Cambridge, England: The University Press. 328 pages. 15 shillings.

THE ADMINISTRATION of the poor-relief statutes in a single English county is reviewed in this notable study covering the period that lay between the passing of the first comprehensive English poor law in 1597, and 1834, the year of poor-law reform. Seeking new light on poor-law institutions, Miss Hampson has explored in some fifty parishes of the County of Cambridgeshire the obscure vestry records that constituted for so long "the short and simple annals of the poor."

The difficulties of "making pauper labor a financial asset to the nation" were understood long before the nineteenth century. Here were the petty Bumbles and Dogberrys of the seventeenth century struggling with the still unsolved problem of work relief. There were always a few individuals like the early philanthropist, Thomas Firmin, who supported made-work projects on disciplinary grounds in spite of the difficulties of carrying them through. "We had better lose something by the labor of the poor, than lose all by letting them live in sloth and idleness." Many of the towns of the seventeenth century had "stocks of material to set the poor on work," and one experiment followed another. The fact that employers could not produce a remunerative turnover when "the scale of wages was fixed and the number of employees was entirely outside their control," failed to shake the faith of the town administrators in the final success of some system of work relief. "Seeking at first to dispose of the pauper manufactures in the open market, the authorities were gradually compelled to use the products more and more exclusively for consumption by the employees themselves"—an experiment that was repeated in the succeeding centuries. Especially interesting in view of our present-day concern over work relief is the story of John Cary of Bristol, who formed a "corporation of the poor" to provide employment for "paupers of all ages and conditions," whom he housed in the Bristol workhouse. At any rate, Cary was revolutionary enough to abolish the parish organization of Bristol, equalize the poor-rates throughout the city, and substitute an executive with salaried officials for the old overseers of the poor in the nineteen separate Bristol parishes. John Cary was certainly the Harry Hopkins of the seventeenth century.

EDITH ABBOTT.

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Books in Brief

Samuel Gridley Howe, by Laura E. Richards. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 282 pages. $2.50.

MRS. RICHARDS' life of her distinguished father is a labor of love and filial piety. It is also a highly readable and inspiriting account of his pioneer work in a number of fields. Dr. Howe stands out as a particularly romantic and dashing figure among the reformers of his day; adventurous and humanitarian strains were closely blended in him. As a young man he fought for Greek independence and organized constructive relief work for the destitute Greek peasants. While in Germany to study methods of teaching the blind, he was thrown into a Prussian jail for sympathizing with Polish revolutionists. Although he is best known for his work with the blind, and particularly for the education of the blind deaf-mute, Laura Bridgman, he was a tireless worker also for abolition, popular education, prison reform and better care for all the dependent classes. His writings in these fields reveal original and far-sighted views anticipating much of the best in modern practice. Mrs. Richards' piety has given us a biography somewhat less critical and searching than a complete illumination of her subject would demand (a shortcoming noticeable particularly in her treatment of Dr. Howe's relations with John Brown); but the warmth and sincerity of her writing carry considerable conviction. She has recreated memorably an attractive and heroic figure.

M. G.

William Vaughn Moody: A Study, by David D. Henry. Boston: Bruce Humphries. 276 pages. $2.50.

Mr. Henry has performed a grateful task with competence and precision. He has collected all the pertinent facts in the career of William Vaughn Moody and interpreted his work in the light of this experience. Thoroughly appreciative of Moody's genius, he is by no means blind to his faults, such as the tendency to luxuriance and overdecoration that led Mr. Santayana to compare his poetry to stained-glass windows. From these faults he freed himself completely in the stark austerity of his last poems, notably "The Death of Eve." Moody's early death was one of the tragedies of literature. He had not reached the full development of his powers. Moreover, in the years immediately following his death a change took place in the form of poetry, which it may be said Moody himself anticipated, but which in its fulness has classed him among the last of the old school, not the first of the new. Mr. Henry's study is to be welcomed as a plea against the injustice of time and circumstances.

R. M. L.

Symphonic Masterpieces, by Olin Downes. New York: The Dial Press. 313 pages. $2.75.

Mr. Downes's "Symphonic Broadcasts" reproduced his broadcast talks on the Philharmonic programs; in "Symphonic Masterpieces" the same material is arranged under composers. One might have expected Mr. Downes, on second reading, to feel a little embarrassed by some of his statements; but they are all there, including the one about Sibelius' "En Saga": "Then the orchestra gathers itself, girds up its loins, and leaps into a dance with knives drawn —lust of battle, glory of death. . . . When I hear this music I avow a carnal desire to discard the soft fat ways of life; to set out in oilskins, or something, for somewhere, to discover at least a polar bear bent on conflict!" For more of this sort of thing, read The New York Times daily and Sundays.

B. H. H.

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The Harsh Voice, by Rebecca West. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

These four long stories, which appeared first in The Saturday Evening Post and The Woman's Home Companion, have little relationship to the author's exciting glittering essays in criticism: they are nearer to "The Return of the Soldier" in length and substance—though not, unfortunately, in writing. The little novels share the author with the essays only in their self-consciousness. The writer's mind is at the surface, never underneath: it is where it should be in the criticism, where it shouldn't be in the stories. One story only, the last in the volume, isn't too long. The others sprawl down those winding-staircase sentences on which Rebecca West's ideas are always so brilliant and sure, however too-tall they really are. Rebecca West knows more about her contemporaries than she does about the characters she chooses to discuss. K. W.

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Contributors

STUART CHASE, the author of many books on economics, is now working on a criterion for nationalization, industry by industry, with appropriate methods for each. Some of this material will appear serially and will be further organized into a book.

SYLVIA KOPALD SELEKMAN has taught classes in Economics and Labor Problems at Barnard and Hunter Colleges. She is the author of "Rebellion in Labor Unions" and co-author of "British Industry Today."

LUCIEN KOCH is president of Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas. His relation to the current situation among the sharecroppers in that state is described in his article.

T. A. BISSON has been a member of the research staff of the Foreign Policy Association since 1929 and writes articles on international affairs.

CAROLINE GORDON, the wife of Allen Tate, has written two novels: "Penhally" and "Alex Maury, Sportsman," the second published last fall by Scribner's.

KENNETH BURKE, who was one of the editors of The Dial, is now working on a series of critical articles dealing with the younger American writers. His latest book, "Permanence and Change," was recently published in The New Republic Series of dollar books.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER, poet and novelist, is literary editor of The New Masses.

EDITH ABBOTT, who has been dean of the School of Social Service Administration of the University of Chicago since 1924, has published several books on social questions.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Martha Gruening, Robert Morss Lovett, B. H. Haggin and Kenneth White.

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